

DEFEATED.

BY KATE PUTNAM.

ALL was confusion: Lemont lay at the feet of Alice Graham, still and pale as death, his friends bending over him to stanch the blood that gushed from the ugly cut in his forehead. Within, a group of awed bystanders pressed to the low windows of the breakfast-room, whence he had been carried into the fresh air.

Miss Graham gazed as one spell-bound into the face before her. So strong was the sensation of the moment that she was hardly conscious of a real thought. Sitting on the veranda in the cool of the summer morning, dreaming the young dreams of eighteen, those misty, rose-colored visions had suddenly vanished, as there came that indefinable feeling, that quick catching of heart and breath, that instant of agonizing suspense, which sometimes warns us of danger. There were strange sounds within, where, but just before, all had been laughter and gayety, and directly after Maynwaring and Harding had stepped through the open window and laid Lemont there, just at her feet, as it happened. All the clear, fresh color faded out of her face, but stooping quickly she held her vinaigrette to restore him to consciousness. When did her breath on his cheek, the slightest touch of her hand, fail to move him before! Even in the apprehension of the moment, Maynwaring caught himself wishing it were he lying there lifeless, that over him the soft golden curls might be dropped, to aid him the small white hand extended. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Duncan Maynwaring from proving as helpful and tender, in his care for the young man, as

if he had been his brother instead of a dangerous rival.

In the doorway stood a gentleman whose attention seemed divided between that prostrated figure and the sweet blonde beauty of Alice Graham. Tall and fair herself, one would have expected him to be better pleased with Julia Maynard, a sparkling brunette, or, indeed, with almost any other lady than that superlative blonde, Miss Graham, whose hair outshone sunshine, and whose complexion was that of a white rose which has caught a faint flush from a crimson neighbor leaning on either side.

Under the strong, reviving influence of her ammonia, the power that held death-locked the consciousness of Lemont gradually gave way, and he stirred faintly. Very faintly, at first, but the movement was perceptible to the anxious watchers, and, in a little more, a shiver ran through his frame, color returned to his cheek and lip, and slowly the white lids unveiled the great dark eyes beneath. His gaze turned wonderingly around on the silent group, the blood-stained handkerchief, and was lifted at length to the face above him. Then it was as if heaven were visible in his eyes, a heaven reflected from within. With a smile of utter contentment he closed them again, while the eyes of the stranger, near by, grew cold and hard as the blue transparency of ice.

"Thanks to your hartshorn, Miss Graham, he's himself again," said Duncan Maynwaring, drawing a deep breath of relief. Then, the influence of alarm withdrawn which had held

their tongues speechless, there began a volley of eager questions and answers.

"How did it happen?" said Charlie Harding, sobered for once. "Why, Miss Maynard, we were sitting at breakfast just as usual, Lemont and I laughing at Maynward, when, all of a sudden, from no cause at all that I could see, unless he is growing delicate and a draft of air was too much for him, just as the door opened, Lemont melted away from his chair like a snow-wreath—at least, would have done so, if he had been one of you ladies, but, as it was, came down with a crash that startled us all, carrying plate and glass victorious before him, and lay prostrate on the floor. And that's all I know about it. Meanwhile, of course you will all lionize him ten times more than ever."

"O Mr. Harding," said the lady, playfully, "how absurdly you do talk! But you really must tell me who that gentleman is, the one by the further window. He must be a new arrival."

"Shall I bring him here to answer for himself?" asked Charlie, a little moodily.

"Yes," she answered, coolly, "if you know him, you may introduce him."

This was unexpected, but, veiling his annoyance as well as possible, Harding hastened to comply with her request, and after a few minutes left them together, with rather a vengeful glance at the new occupant of the seat beside Miss Maynard.

The usual common society ground of acquaintance was traversed, the beauties of weather, scenery, summer resorts, etc., had played their stereotyped parts, and Julia Maynard felt that she had advanced little toward her desideratum, a flirtation with Mr. Arbuthnot, who seemed the least plastic material her moulding hands had ever known. Politely unresponsive to her coquetries, his eyes turned, from time to time, to a far-away corner of the veranda, where a charming little picture might be seen: Alice Graham alone with Lemont, who, now recovered, leans against the pillar, with a handkerchief yet bound around his temples.

"Are you quite yourself now, Mr. Lemont?" asked Alice, suddenly breaking the silence. The great, dreamy eyes of her companion meet her own, as she looks up.

"Yes, quite myself, Miss Alice." And, after these simple words, speech dies away into a silence more eloquent.

What else exists, in all the world, beside these two, to whom heaven and earth change

places? what existed in Eden save its happy inmates, whose paradise lay not so much in that blissful country as in each other? What else existed there? Ah, but what entered? Not yet, however, has the flaming sword driven them from the charmed land; not yet, through miles of weary distance, do they look back to its sorrowful beauty.

Another sees the picture, framed in clustering bitter-sweet, and tries hard to choke down the hard, rebellious thoughts that arise in his heart at the sight. And he watches the sea not far distant, wave on wave creeping up the tawny sands to fall back baffled, restrained by the Power that saith, "Thus far and no farther."

"An emblem of my destiny; as useless as my efforts," he thought, as he gazed.

Nature cheers or saddens; chameleon-like, she takes the hue of our moods. The sea, blue, sunlit and scintillating near the shore, unfathomable purple afar, to others seemed opening into the beyond, unknown and beautiful, while Miss Maynard and her companion were talking of bathing, and trusting that the weather might continue pleasant.

In the hotel corridor, where the moonlight shone dimly through the window, Lemont met Arbuthnot. With a fierce gesture and a muttered oath, he caught him by the arm, and throwing open the door of his room, half dragging him in and motioning him to a seat.

"St. John, for God's sake, speak and tell me what it means!" but Arbuthnot looked at him with stony eyes.

"You mistake my name, sir, it is not St. John but Arbuthnot."

On Lemont's forehead the perspiration stood in drops. He clutched violently at the mantel to steady himself, gasping out:

"Great heavens! what a likeness!"

"Rather a tragical way of announcing it," sneered the other. "I assure you I know nothing of your friend, Mr. St. John, and—pardon me, Mr. Lemont, but I fear our farther conversation would only prove an unnecessary excitement in your present state." And bowing he left the room, while Lemont gazed after him with half-vacant eyes, offering no response to his good-evening.

The minutes dragged by unheeded, until nearly an hour had elapsed, while still he sat there, his face buried in his hands, only roused at length by noisy voices along the passage, as Maynward and Harding entered.

"Tip us a cigar, Lemont. Let us smoke in

honor of this occasion," said Charlie Harding, rather unsteadily.

"What occasion?" asked Lemont, looking up, gloomily.

"Why, the boating party! The fair Julie, my especial, and the divine Graham, are out rowing with Denvers and Mr. Arbuthnot. 'She's all my fancy painted her!' You haven't a dagger, or bowie-knife, or revolver, to lend me, have you?"

"I advise you to keep out of her sight, for to-night, at least," said Maynwaring, quietly, looking into the young man's flushed face.

"Hear him!" cried Harding. "Come, Lemont, where are your pledges? bring them on, old fellow, and we'll swear not to look on the wine when it is red."

"You would shut your eyes and drink it, then," said Maynwaring, "the first time Julia Maynard glanced in another direction."

"And how is it with the divine Alice, Lemont?" continued Harding; "if this philosopher wont allow us to pledge ourselves to abstinence, perhaps he will join us in drinking her health."

"I never drink," replied Lemont, quietly.

"That's too good!" shouted Harding, incredulously. "Come now, you mean to say you don't know the taste of wine?"

Lemont made no answer.

"Charlie," said Duncan Maynwaring, "it's evident that only politeness prevents Lemont from sending us away."

"O no," remonstrated Lemont, arousing himself from a fit of abstraction, "stay, by all means."

But Maynwaring dragged Harding off. The kindness was not lost on Lemont.

"When I die," he said to himself, "may Duncan Maynwaring's face be the last thing on earth I see."

Then another face arose before him, the moody sadness left his eyes, and with a half smile he gazed forth into the clear moonlight that seemed to beckon him. So out into the evening he went, the large bright stars overhead, the soft, dew-sparkled grass beneath, and wandered along a shady path in a dream-like, purposeless way, his heart full of a subtle intoxication.

Here and there the moonlight was obscured by the shadowy, sweet syringa, abloom with white tremulous stars. All beauty, whether of sight, or sound, or fragrance, touched a responsive chord in Lemont's nature. He threw himself down and breathed in the heavy, sensuous odor.

Some plants express whole histories in a single breath; one would think the very essence of a life's sweetness lay crushed up within their petals, so passionate, so sense—and almost soul-satisfying are they. Thus felt Lemont as the thick-woven syringas dropped their dew over him, while the lapping of the waves made far-off music, and the moon, with potent touch, transformed the common-place world into a fitting abode for angels or fairies.

For an hour or more he lay on the grass, careless of the balmy tears of the blossoms overdrooping, or the damp earth below, forgetful that too much happiness drains dry the cup of life, and that bitterest dregs underlie the froth and sparkle.

"Aren't you coming, Alice?" asked a voice, the clear treble of Julia Maynard. "No? well, then, good-night. But remember, there's madness in the moon."

"Worse madness in leaving it for anything more prosaic," laughed Alice, in reply.

"Ah, but where will be your roses tomorrow?"

"Moonlight never withered roses."

The nearing sound showed that Alice was coming straight toward the spot where Lemont lay, every nerve thrilling to the dying cadences of her voice, and her light step through the grass. Nearer still, she did not see him dark in shadow, her floating dress brushed him, as, in passing, she paused to break the syringa stems, dropping down the loosened petals amid a shower of spray. Then her gathered blossoms fluttered to the ground, and still humming a low refrain of an Italian love-song, she bent to lift them up. She touched his hair and he arose, checking her slight cry.

"O Mr. Lemont!" she said, her voice trembling, her heart throbbing with the exquisite thrill of that soft hair upon her fingers. "How you startled me! I fancied no one but myself had found out this sweet little nook."

Lemont did not tell her that, his window overlooking it, he had more than once seen her wend her way to this green retreat, wherein, accordingly, he had waited for her coming to-night, when she should return from rowing. Indeed, he did not speak, but only looked down at her in the moonlight. These silences on his part, though nothing new, never failed to embarrass her.

A shade of coldness seemed to grow upon her face, for, the barrier of speech withdrawn, Lemont had come too near. She felt the

warm magnetism of his presence too dangerous, and unwilling to surrender to this influence, made an effort to resist it.

"Mr. Lemont," she said, looking up with a smile shy in spite of itself, "the moonbeams on the waves, to-night, were positively magical. Such infinitesimal rainbows, prisms of perfect color, the oars threw up. My spirits were quite wild. Then we all grew imaginative and speculative; even practical Mr. Denvers; and Julia was a sibyl, and told our fortunes, and Mr. Arbuthnot, who says he is a physiognomist, read our faces. And then in some way the conversation turned on you, and Mr. Denvers declared you had a secret—"

"A secret?" repeated Lemont, "what sort of a secret?"

"O, one of the dark, mysterious sort, as far as I could judge. He says he has thought so from the first, and he related the legend of the man who always saw a face above his shoulder. Did you ever hear anything so absurd? and for a person like Mr. Denvers, too! If I had thought of it—"

"Well," replied her companion, very calmly, "what if you had fancied such a thing?"

"Why," replied the girl, surprised at something unusual in his manner, "they would have laughed at me; but as it was Mr. Denvers's sole deviation from common sense, I thought it would amuse you to see of what romance even he is capable."

"Yes," answered Lemont, "it was certainly amusing, and I am flattered that he should have selected me for his first essay at the fanciful. And now, what was your destiny as unfolded in the sibylline leaves, and your character as read by Mr. Arbuthnot?"

"For the first, my life will be very happy; and for the last—"

"But," interrupted Lemont, "happiness is so indefinite, it may mean anything."

"How can happiness be anything but itself?"

"There are all kinds for all persons: for some, pleasure, for others, renunciation. Forgiveness or revenge, love or hatred, we must look within for the definition."

"All that is too abstruse for my poor fortune, which consisted simply of the usual amount of love and jealousy, and lovers dark and fair."

"And which was chosen?" he asked, eagerly, as if the question was of the utmost importance.

"The blonde, I believe," she answered, blushing slightly.

"What utter—well, no matter. What did Mr. Arbuthnot say?"

"Ball-room compliments," said Alice, with a light laugh.

Lemont's face grew dark, then with one of his rapid changes, he bent toward her with a look in his eyes that she never forgot, mingled of love and longing, pain and passion infinite. It terrified her. She dared not yield, she dreaded the strength of the current that might sweep her along, the nature, so intense and fiery, that would absorb her own. Already, dizzy and bewildered as one who looks, fascinated, into a plunging torrent, shuddering at the might of its waves, she drew back from that long gaze.

"It is nearly eleven," she said, glancing at her watch. "I must go in. Mamma will tell me I was thoughtless."

Lemont drew her light shawl closer over her shoulders, and walked with her to the house. Quietly another figure, just beyond the syringas, moved away in the opposite direction.

Gradually matters began to go against Lemont. From a slight cause come serious effects; and that absurd fancy of Mr. Denvers was gaining ground. People now shunned him, although hardly able to express a more definite reason for doing so than was conveyed in the mysterious head shakings which greeted any mention of his name. But there is often more condemnation in a shake of the head than in a whole catalogue of accusations such as may be met and combated openly. Who knew anything of Lemont's antecedents, asked Society, which, charmed out of caution, at first, had taken him for granted, had petted and spoiled him, and now, at this late day, was inquiring into his previous life. Poor Lemont! An intangible shadow had clouded his existence, a shadow settling more and more heavily, and forbidding him to throw it off and step once more into the bright sunshine. Nor did he seek to escape its blight, meeting with haughty defiance the coldness of his former friends.

"Hang it, Lemont," said Charlie Harding, one day, "what's all this I hear? Everybody seems to be gossiping about you, but I can't for the life of me make out what it's all about. You haven't committed forgery, murder and the seven deadly sins? Make me your confessor if you have. It always seemed to me as if you ought to be a Catholic. There, by Jove! there's a stunning couple, Arbuthnot and Miss Graham. Julia told me, last night,

that it was not improbable, etc., etc., as Mrs. Graham was not averse, etc. She is wonderfully impressed in Arbuthnot's favor, it seems to me."

It was a peculiarity of Charlie Harding's that he could rattle on, for an indefinite length of time, with perfect carelessness of the feelings of others.

"Come, Lemont, you surely won't refuse to drink to the health of the prospective bride and bridegroom?"

"No," said Lemont, with sudden fierceness.

An hour afterward, out in the syringas, Arbuthnot and Alice Graham suddenly came upon a prostrate figure.

"Good heavens!" cried the latter. "It is Mr. Lemont. What is the matter? He is not dead?" fearfully, as she saw the white face and motionless form.

"No, not dead," replied Arbuthnot, with bitter scorn. "Let me take you to the house."

Although Alice, with her shuddering recollection of that scene, could never speak of it, the story was soon well-known—leaves, like walls, having ears—and it was rolled as a sweet morsel under the tongues of the young man's enemies.

"So fortunate, dear Mrs. Graham, that people had not yet begun to connect his name with Alice!" said a sympathizing friend.

"O, Alice had never any preference for him!"

Which came to the ears of Lemont.

Charlie Harding could not now bring against him a former complaint. Duncan Maynwaring strove steadily to hold him back from the ruin which seemed to lie before him; but Lemont, shaking off the restraining hand, would continue his reckless course. As the weeks passed by he grew thin and haggard, while dark circles around his eyes and lines about his mouth spoke plainly of the life he led.

"Poor fellow!" said Maynwaring, "they drove him to it with their idle gossip, suspicions founded on nothing." And all the more vigilant was his care for his unhappy friend.

"This afternoon, Lemont, for the sake of old times, come out with me; it will do you good," he begged, one day, and for once the good counsel prevailed.

"Now, my dear friend," continued Duncan, as they strolled together toward the shore, "I want to talk plainly with you. You are killing yourself."

"What if I am?" answered the young man, moodily. "Does that injure any one?"

"Yes," said Duncan, firmly; "no man has a right to destroy his life as you are doing. Life and death are solemn matters, whose adjustment is not for us."

Lemont snatched his arm from his companion's. "You will drive me mad!" he said, fiercely; and turning with a quick, impatient tread hurried off without a glance behind.

"I have offended him with my unsought advice," thought Maynwaring, looking after the lessening form. "Poor fellow! I'm afraid he will find experience a harder teacher yet. Well, I will not give him up, but by-and-by, when he is cooler, he will listen to me, perhaps. I will save him in spite of himself."

Lemont, leaving his friend, joined a group of loungers who were drinking and smoking together. Here, drinking recklessly and talking with a wild gayety far enough from any real mirth, he swallowed enough of the fiery poison to burn up reason and judgment without destroying that mechanical control of the senses over the body: then, leaving the others to calculate to a nicety how long a time would be necessary for his present course to kill him, he wandered moodily away, restless with the fire that was stinging blood and brain to an unnatural heat. In this mood he met Arbuthnot, who looked at him with a cold sneer, maddening to his excitement. He seized him roughly by the arm, but Arbuthnot, shaking off the unsteady grasp, said, with a hard, cruel emphasis:

"No violence, I beg. One trial is sufficient at the game of murder."

Lemont's arm dropped nerveless to his side, his cheek paling to a sudden, ghastly white, but recovering himself with an effort, he said, hoarsely:

"Who are you? what do you know? I will be answered!"

There was remorse, despair, almost frenzy in his face, but there was a fierce determination as well, which showed his mood not one to be trifled with. Arbuthnot looked at him for a moment with cool contempt, as if enjoying the storm he had raised, without, as it seemed, any intention of allaying it, then, some other thought prevailing, he said, after an instant's reflection:

"I am quite ready to give you any explanation which you may desire, Mr. Lemont. Shall we speak here or in your room?"

"Here!" said Lemont, impatiently. "For God's sake, whatever it is, let me hear it at once!"

The other, however, seemed in no haste to

assuage the tortures of his victim. Walking up and down the sequestered alley, he repeated, in a leisurely manner, a tale which silenced the words on his companion's lip, and called great drops of agony to his brow. At length, however, this frigid narrator warmed with his story, and it was with a dangerous, steely glitter in his cold, blue eyes, that he whispered, between set teeth, the concluding words:

"I swore, in that hour, sooner or later to have my revenge, to hunt you out in any retreat, and make your life a curse worse than any death. I have kept the first part of my promise; I have found you. As for the rest—you are very happy now, are you not? Your name is blackened in every mouth, your hopes are blasted, you are sinking into a drunkard's grave, and—Alice Graham, who loathes and despises you, will be *my wife*. Yes, Mr. Lemont, I leave you to decide if such an existence as yours is not *almost* as delightful as the fate you so kindly intended for me! And now, pardon me, I have an engagement."

And with a smile which, in its deliberate malice, its gloating gluttoned vengeance, seemed too fiendish for a human face, he turned away with the parting mockery of a low bow.

Lemont, leaning against the tree where he had staggered for support, followed with vacant eyes. Through the stupefaction on his face were visible strangely blended emotions: relief unutterable, fierce hatred, and mortal anguish. Still, with sharpest pang, came back the thought of Alice Graham's scorn and loathing for him—for him, who had lavished upon her, in one wild idolatry, all the intense, adoring love of which his passionate nature—strong alike for good or evil—was capable. And in return she hated him; she turned from his worship to the cool, critical admiration of his enemy, the man who had tortured his whole life, and now took away its one desire to gratify his own fastidious selfishness. Well, he acknowledged the justice of his own punishment; he deserved nothing better; yet if he might but gain one kind tone from her lips, one sweet glance from her eyes, before he left her forever! If he might only go away, knowing that she did not hate him!

Thus thinking, he lifted his eyes to see, with a thrill, the flutter of her light robe in an adjoining path. He went forward, eagerly, to meet her, but perceiving him she turned quickly down another of the winding ways. Lemont stood still, struck to the heart with a chill like the shiver of a sword-thrust. It was all true, then: she loathed and feared him,

she shrank instinctively from his presence. Well, he would relieve her of it; and so thinking, bitterly, he drew back again, mechanically, as he caught the tones of Arbuthnot's voice mingled with Alice Graham's sweet cadences. Then the wind brought him the concluding words:

"Well, Miss Alice, the boat will be ready in half an hour. I shall find you at the Shore Arbor? Very well. *Au revoir*."

Then the voices were silent, and the steps, turning in another direction, died away.

Lemont stood motionless, torn by contending emotions. Regardless of his sufferings, she, for whom he would have thought happiness cheaply purchased by any sacrifice of his own, was seeking her pleasure in the society of the man who had made his life one long torment. The blood surged hot through his veins, the subtle intoxication, dispelled awhile by the late terrible interview, began to riot anew, gleaming dangerously in his eyes.

"Let it end here!" he said, desperately, to himself. "One of us must die—and he says right, there has been enough of murder. *My life is my own, at least.*"

He sighed restlessly at the remembrance of Maynwaring's words. "He is a true friend," he thought; "the only friend I ever had. If I could leave Alice to *him*, I might be content. No, no, Heaven knows I must hate the man that took her from me."

He went to his room, occupied himself awhile in writing; then, seeing that it was not far from the time set for the meeting of Alice and Arbuthnot, he rose, unlocked a drawer and took out a loaded revolver. Concealing it about his person, he left the house, taking his way toward the Shore Arbor, so called from the fact of its standing close to the beach, in an extreme end of the long garden.

Lemont entered and sat down. It was a lonely, deserted place, in general, the sea-winds being rather too searching for the comfort of idlers. Around it ran a broad seat, with a rustic table, curiously twisted, in the centre. Lemont leaned his arm on the table and took up his revolver, examining it carefully, to see that the charges were all right.

"She hates me," he muttered, "she turns her back from me to meet him. Well, there will be three at the meeting—one they do not look for!"

A mad smile distorted his mouth, giving place the next moment to a gravity as fixed and desperate. He turned his face aside: the revolver was in his hand, his finger on the

trigger—when a flying shadow rushed between him and the sunlight, and the bullet, thrown upward with sudden force, went crashing through the roof of the summer-house. It was Maynwaring, who, following him with a vague apprehension of some calamity, had been just in time to avert the fatal shot.

"Lemont," he said, laying his hand upon the bowed head, "my poor friend, has it come to this!"

At the sorrowful sympathy of those tones Lemont lifted his head, but meeting the pitying eyes his own grew fiercer again.

"Why not?" he cried. "Is my life so precious that I should hoard it up? Duncan Maynwaring, would you like to hear what a treasure you have saved?"

Then, in a few bitter words, he told the story of his life: how, from early youth, one man had been his evil fate, tempting him, taunting him, maddening his hot Cuban blood with every dangerous allurements of fashionable vice, until, one day, delirious with wine and goaded by the gibes of his persecutor, in one mad moment he had pushed him over the precipice on which they stood. Then he had fled from his native land, pursued everywhere by a haunting remorse, which quickened to a constant sting at the sudden appearance of this man, St. John, who miraculously escaping death, had followed his victim, to wreak under another name, the revenge he had sworn to take, and thus, denying his own identity, had been an unceasing torture to Lemont, recalling terrible associations and foiling every cherished hope of the future. This day, thinking his vengeance complete, he had told him all, with a cruel minuteness of malice that exulted in the agony it gave.

His few desperate words spoken, Lemont's head fell back upon the table, Maynwaring standing by, looking pitifully down upon him. Sitting beside him, then, he began to soothe and comfort him, seeking to turn away the darker side to let in a gleam of light upon his misery.

"It is no time for despair, my dear friend," he said, tenderly. "Whatever the sin and the suffering, your life has escaped that worse woe that overshadowed it. There is no stain of blood on your hands. Have comfort, and take up your life again, and with God's help, live it after a purer fashion."

But Lemont only stirred restlessly beneath these solemn words.

"I have nothing to live for, now," he said,

hopelessly. "I tell you, Maynwaring, *she* hates me. He said so, and I saw her turn away from me to meet him. I never will live to see her *his* wife!"

Maynwaring's lips were arrested, at the moment, by the sight of Alice Graham coming down the alley to her appointment. With sudden resolution he turned to Lemont.

"I will leave you now. By-and-by you will think more calmly of all this. Heaven comfort you, meanwhile!"

Then hurrying down the path he met Alice, to whom, very briefly, he related something of what had occurred.

"He is utterly desperate," he said; "and still resolved upon taking his life. He believes that you hate him. Alice, you alone can save him, and if it is not too late for that, remember that his life is in your love."

With that he turned and walked away, happier in the renunciation of his dearest hope than if he had realized its fullest fruition. Alice hastened on, trying to still the fluttering heart-beats that made her weak and giddy. On the threshold she paused an instant. Lemont had not stirred: his head laid on the table, his face hidden on his arms. Alice moved noiselessly to his side.

"Mr. Lemont," she said; softly, touching his hand with her own.

He started and looked up: through his yearning eyes his soul drew hers, until, speechless with love, dizzily happy, she sank into his arms.

"You do not hate me," he murmured, "you do not hate me?"

"I love you," she whispered, her faint lips close to his, her whole nature startled from its reserve by the magnetism of his touch. "Live for me, or let me die with you."

The long silence was broken by a step at the door. They looked up, to meet the eyes of Arbuthnot, wherein was a hell that might have more than satisfied his cruellest enemy. Seeking Alice at first in order to further his revenge, he had come at last to love her with all that strong, unscrupulous passion that would strike its object dead sooner than yield it to another. Baffled, powerless, desperate, he glared at them a moment with deadly rage and hate, and turning with a curse, left the lovers to their heaven.

DEL'S HAIR.

Bigelow, Elizabeth

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DEL'S HAIR.

BY ELIZABETH BIGELOW.

AUNT HESTER and I were in the breakfast room; she industriously working in Berlin wool on canvas a rainbow-hued bird, resembling a parrot, carrying in its mouth an immense bough covered with indescribable foliage, intended as a representation of the dove carrying the olive-branch to Noah, I sipping my late cup of chocolate. Dick the canary, singing in his gilded cage in the bay-window, trilled out a gay little song and a voice from the hall answered him—a girl's voice, loud and clear enough to drown a dozen canaries singing together. It was Del.

She was always up with the lark, and had breakfasted hours before. Now she was dressed in a walking-suit, with a coquettish little black velvet hat perched above her golden hair. O such hair! It was just pure gold in sunshine and shadow; indeed it never looked as if it were in shadow; it had caught the sunshine and held it. It was braided and wound around the back of her head, and one great loose shining curl hung at the side, reaching below the waist. She cast a little satisfied glance at it as she settled her hat more firmly upon her head. Del was

vain of her hair. Only the afternoon before Aunt Hester and I had overheard Fred Vane coaxing her to give him the least little lock of it for a keepsake, and she had refused, though Fred had been her playmate when they were children and always "like a brother to her," she declared, and he was going away to California, to be gone nobody knew how long. I thought she might have refused it to him because she didn't like to give him anything that might seem like a love token, but Aunt Hester insists that it was because she was so vain of her hair that she couldn't bear to part with a spear of it. But then Aunt Hester was very angry; Fred was her especial pet; he was the son of an old friend, I always shrewdly suspected of an old lover of hers, and she was not by any means satisfied with the "brotherly" light in which Del regarded him.

Fred, poor fellow, was still less satisfied with it. But they neither of them seemed able to better the matter, for Del was the most stubborn, self-willed little mortal alive, and had scores of admirers, and many "eligible" ones among them. There was Doctor Faulkner, not yet forty, and with no end of money, Mr. Stuyvesant, who hadn't as much money but belonged to a very old family and was considered one of the most talented young lawyers in the city, and young Sparkes whose head was thought to be rather empty but whose papa's purse was very full. And who was Fred Vane? Del would ask, with a scornful curl of her dainty lip. Only a clerk in a wholesale dry goods store, and not likely to be anything better than that very soon, for he had a widowed mother to support, and besides that had undertaken to pay off an old debt of his father's—an absurd, high-flown notion a great many people called it, but I knew Del didn't think so, for I had seen her face flush and the tears start in her eyes when anybody mentioned it. She would have been ready to worship anybody else who did so noble a thing, but Fred was only Fred, after all; she had known him all his life, and—his hair and whiskers were undeniably red! he didn't look in the least like a hero. That was always the sum and substance of her argument, when she condescended to argue about it at all, which was not often.

"Where are you going?" asked Aunt Hester, tartly.

"I'm going down town; it's a lovely morning, and I want a breath of fresh air," responded Del.

"Didn't you know that Fred was coming here this morning to bid us good-by?" continued Aunt Hester, trying to speak calmly, but so excited that she took a stitch half way across her canyon.

"I believe I heard him say something about it," said Del, indifferently. "But I don't know why I should stay at home to see Fred Vane. I see him quite often enough without making any effort."

"Well, you won't be troubled with seeing him much more, you wicked, ungrateful girl!" said Aunt Hester, with energy. "He is going a great ways off, and there are earthquakes and all manner of awful diseases there. He may never come back!"

"Quite likely," said Del, coolly, shaking her flounces into place.

"The good die young, and they whose hearts
Are dry as summer's dust—"

"I guess you'll find out, as well as anybody, how they turn out!" burst in Aunt Hester, now thoroughly aroused. "Dry as summer dust, indeed!—your heart is worse than that—it's as dry as ashes!"

Del only swept her a saucy courtesy for answer, whirled around on the tips of her toes, a proceeding that was always harrowing to Aunt Hester's nerves, and vanished.

"O that child! that child!" groaned Aunt Hester. "I thought that now Fred is going away she might repent of her hard-heartedness. I told the poor boy so, when he was so down-hearted yesterday. I promised him that he should see her this morning, and that she should give him that lock of hair that she refused him yesterday. And now what shall I do? But she hasn't gone yet," she added, as we heard a slight rustling in the hall, "perhaps she has relented after all."

But I was not very hopeful of that. I thought it much more likely that she was waiting to take a last admiring peep at herself in the hall mirror; but Aunt Hester ran out to try to coax her, as she usually did when scolding failed—as for that matter, it always did fail. She was not successful, for in a very few moments I heard the hall door shut rather energetically. But Aunt Hester came back with a smile of grim triumph upon her face. It clouded over, however, very soon when I inquired if Del had gone.

"Gone? yes, of course! and I am glad! She is not half good enough for Fred, and I shall tell him so."

But that seemed to be very little consolation to Fred, who made his appearance soon after. He waited as long as he could, hoping for Del's return, but was forced to go at last, with a very rueful face. Aunt Hester followed him into the hall, and they had quite a parley there. She had whispered a little encouragement, I knew, for when he passed the window his face looked a little more hopeful.

Half an hour after he had gone Del came sauntering back, as unconcernedly as if there were no such things as partings in the world.

"I hope you had a pleasant walk," said Aunt Hester, grimly.

"Very, thank you," responded Del, with the utmost nonchalance, throwing herself down upon the ottoman. In doing so she turned the side of her head towards me and I uttered a cry of consternation.

"Why, Del, what has become of your curl?"

It had been cut off close to the roots—only a whisp of hair, half an inch long, perhaps, remained!

Del actually grew pale as she put her hand up and found that it was really gone.

"How could it have happened? What can have become of it?" she said, looking as if she thought some supernatural agency had removed it.

"Become of it! Somebody has stolen it, of course. I have often read of such things in the papers. In these days when everybody wears false hair, and it is worth so much, of course there are plenty of thieves about trying to steal it. And in your case I should call it a just judgment of Providence for vanity and hardness of heart," said Aunt Hester.

"I wouldn't have believed that anybody could cut it off without my knowing it," said Del. "O dear, I wish I hadn't gone! What in the world shall I do with that little wisp? It won't stay tucked up."

"You had better have taken my advice and staid at home," said Aunt Hester.

Del kept on lamenting.

"It was nearly half of my hair!" she said. "If I could only find it again I could fasten it on so it wouldn't show that it had been cut off. Perhaps the thief, whoever he was, will sell it at one of the hair-stores, and I can get it again. I mean to go into every one in the city! I should know it at once. There isn't a bit of hair like mine in C—, I am sure."

"You had better set all your admirers at work hunting for it, and offer yourself as a prize to the one that succeeded," I suggested.

"That would be nice and romantic, wouldn't it?" said Del. "I have a great mind to try it. But, just think, old Mr. Jenkins might find it! he has on a new wig every time I see him, so he must have had a good deal of experience in hair-stores, and he would be more likely to find it than anybody. And then what should I do? I'll try my best to find it myself before I do that."

Del and I hunted hair-stores for the next three days and saw every shade of curls from white to black but the right one. I had never realized before how rare a shade Del's hair was. At the end of the three days I tried to persuade Del that the quest was ridiculous and success impossible, and refused to lend my aid or countenance any longer to such folly. But Del was not to be daunted; she took her particular friend Nan Etheridge for a companion, and continued the search.

Del came home one night after a week had passed with an expression of utter despair on her face, and Nan Etheridge declared that Del's curl was surely not in C—, and she was sure there was not another bit of the same shade on the whole face of the globe.

"I don't think there is, Nan," said Del, despondently. "We won't search any more. But I will do as Beth suggested—like the princess in the fairy-story who lost her ring. I vow and declare that I will marry anybody that will bring me back my curl!"

"Provided he will have you, I suppose," said Aunt Hester.

"Not provided any such thing," responded Del; "for of course nobody would try to find it who didn't want to marry me."

"Well, remember that you have said it! and I shall tell everybody I meet," said Nan, rising to go.

"I am sorry you said that, Del," I said, seriously, after Nan had gone; "it was foolish, and it may prove really embarrassing."

"I don't know," said Del. "I think sometimes that I may as well marry one person as another. Aunt Hester will never let me have any peace until I am married."

"If it doesn't make any difference to you, you might have married the one that Aunt Hester wished you to," I said.

Del's face grew scarlet.

"If you are going to talk to me about Fred Vane I shall leave you," she said. And she did.

To my astonishment Aunt Hester did not express any disapprobation of Del's folly.

"You will certainly find out how much real love your pretended admirers have for you, Delphine," she said, quite sentimentally; "for there is nothing so hard for a man to do as to exercise his patience in such a way."

Nan kept her word of telling everybody she met of Del's vow, but Del was so sure that her curl was not to be found that she did not feel any anxiety in regard to the consequences, and considered her situation romantic and delightful.

Three days from the time when Nan Etheridge had made Del's foolish speech known, Will Etheridge, a medical student scarcely out of his teens, Nan's cousin, and Del's particular aversion, who had for a long time been casting admiring eyes upon Del, appeared with a long curl, very nearly red in color, which he produced with much embarrassment and delight, believing himself without a doubt the fortunate finder of the missing treasure. He went away very much amazed and chagrined when he saw how mistaken he had been, and Del laughed till she cried.

"You see, Beth, there is not the least danger of its proving 'really embarrassing,' as you said. My admirers, as Aunt Hester calls them, think my hair is red."

"That is only one admirer," I answered, "and he is very near-sighted, you know. If Fred Vane were here he would find it, I know. Del, don't you wish he were?" I had been forbidden to mention the name of her absent sweetheart to Del, but I had a suspicion in my mind, that was growing stronger every day, and I was determined to discover whether it was groundless or not.

Del's face grew rosy. I saw that before she had time to turn it away from me, which she did with a sudden interest in a newly-blossomed tea-rose in the bay-window.

"I don't know, Beth," she answered, half sadly, and as she turned her head I saw, to my astonishment, two great glittering tears coursing down her cheeks.

I went up to her and put my arms around her.

"Del, do you really care for him?" I asked. How the brown eyes flashed!

"You have no right to ask me such a question!" she said. "And how ridiculous! As if I were such a goose as to care for Fred Vane!"

Aunt Hester came in just then, and Del ran out, to hide her flushed cheeks.

I confessed my suspicions to Aunt Hester, and her delight knew no bounds.

"I believe it will come out right at last, my dear. I believe it will!" she said, joyfully.

But alas, our hopes were to be dashed, very soon, to the ground.

Del was very uncommunicative for the next few days, and I never knew how many of her admirers had been in pursuit of that unlucky curl of hair. Mr. Stuyvesant, who had always seemed to be the most favored one, had gone suddenly to visit a sister in a distant city, and was absent for more than a week. But on the very evening of his return he came to our house. I had a headache and retired early to my room. It was after eleven o'clock when I heard Del come up stairs. She came directly into my room, swinging in her hand a curl of long, light hair. She turned the gas up to a brilliant blaze and held the curl up beside her own hair. It was precisely the same shade.

"O Del," I cried, in surprise and consternation, "did Mr. Stuyvesant bring it? Where did he find it?"

"Yes, Mr. Stuyvesant brought it. He found it in L——, where he has been."

"And does he expect you to fulfil your promise? O Del, I told you that you would be sorry for saying that foolish thing!"

"Of course he expected me to fulfil my promise! But I don't see why I should be sorry for that."

"Del, you will not marry him?"

For answer Del held her finger up before the light. A bright diamond glittered on it.

"O Del, what have you done!" I cried.

"Only fulfilled my promise," she answered, trying to speak carelessly, though her face was very pale. "And I am sure anybody would consider it a very fine match for me. Why don't you congratulate me?"

"But you don't love him, Del," I persisted.

"No, but perhaps I may, some day. At any rate I shall not be the only person in the world who has married without love."

I saw that the child was determined; she acted as if some strange, uncanny influence possessed her, and I said nothing more. Indeed it was now too late, since Mr. Stuyvesant's betrothal ring was on her finger.

I was sorry when I heard Aunt Hester's footsteps approaching, for I disliked to be a witness of her disappointment. She looked at the curl in amazement, then at the ring on Del's finger, and could not help understanding the state of the case.

"It is not your hair!" she cried.

Del held up a tress of her hair which she had unbound and placed the curl beside it.

"Now do you see?" she said.

Aunt Hester looked bewildered; she could not deny that the curl was exactly like Del's hair.

"But it is not so long as yours!" she cried, suddenly. And Del held it up and measured, and indeed it was full two inches shorter!

"I told you that it wasn't yours!" exclaimed Aunt Hester, triumphantly.

"But it is mine. I know nobody else has hair just the shade of mine. A little of it must have been cut off," insisted Del.

"O, if you wish to believe it," said Aunt Hester, angrily, "of course it is easy enough to do so." And she went away, too indignant to trust herself to stay longer.

"I have given her up," she said, to me, with a tragic air, the next morning. "I shall let her choose her own way. She is a vain, heartless little coquette, and never was half good enough for Fred Vane."

"But, Aunt Hester, I don't really see what the child can do, now. Mr. Stuyvesant found her hair, and she is bound to marry him," I said.

"It isn't her hair," retorted Aunt Hester. "Didn't you see the difference in the length? But let her marry him, let her marry him!"

Poor Aunt Hester! It was a greater disappointment to her than she would acknowledge. She was restless and unhappy, and even her worsted-work, the delight of her heart, was neglected. Fred Vane had promised to write her often of his success and his prospects, and she had received one letter on his arrival in San Francisco, but after that four months passed and she heard nothing from him, and there came no letter to Del, though he had asked and obtained her permission to write to her. That was one cause, I fancied, of Aunt Hester's uneasiness. Del never mentioned his name. She grew very silent and distraught as the months went on, and paler and thinner than her wont; altogether more like a drooping lily than the brilliant, gay little rosebud I had always likened her to.

Never was there a more devoted lover than Mr. Stuyvesant, and the pallor and want of spirits of his betrothed seemed to trouble him. Aunt Hester, too, was troubled about her at last, and began to forget her anger in redoubled tenderness and care. But as soon as Del saw that her sadness was noticed and

that she was an object of pity, she assumed a gayety and light-heartedness that I was sure she did not feel, and made the whole household merry, as of old.

One day in early spring Aunt Hester, Del and I were sitting in the drawing-room when Nan Etheridge came in.

"To unfold her usual budget of gossip," I said, when I saw her coming; but I saw by her face that it was something more serious than usual.

"Do you know that Fred Vane is dead? Isn't it sad?" she said. "His mother has only just heard of it. She had a letter saying the physician who attended him said that he could not live twenty-four hours, and the next thing his trunk and all his things were sent home to her— Why, Del," she added, in a startled voice, "I didn't think that—"

Del had grown white as snow. She rose, now, and reached out her hands with a little blind motion and a faint quivering cry; then sank back again senseless.

It was months before she was wholly herself again. Fever had been threatening her for days before that sudden shock, the doctor said, and that of course had hastened it. In her delirium all the secrets of the poor little sorely-wounded heart were told, and Aunt Hester forgot her own sorrow in pity for her darling.

It was a bright June morning when Del first left her room. We carried her down into the breakfast-room, the brightest and sunniest room in the house, and there she sat in a great arm-chair, her face looking white as a lily against the crimson cushions.

It was the first time she had ever spoken to me of Fred since her illness. Aunt Hester had been to see poor Mrs. Vane, who lived a little distance out of the city, and she had told Del all that she had heard; but Del seemed anxious to avoid all mention of him. Now Mr. Stuyvesant had begged to see her, and she had implored me to make some excuse for her, to keep him away at all events.

"I don't feel as if I could ever see him again," she said. "I have treated him badly—I have been so wicked, but O Beth, how terrible my punishment has been! I loved him so—Fred—and yet don't think me any worse than I am, I never knew it until he was gone, never really until I had promised to marry Mr. Stuyvesant. And now he is dead, and he will never, never know how much I loved him!" And Del hid her face in my lap, her frame shaking with sobs.

I heard a quick, eager step behind me, and when I raised my eyes my heart almost stopped beating. A tall, manly form was bending over Del—a form that I knew well; the eyes shining with an eager, joyful light which told me he had heard Del's words, if it was really Fred Vane, in the flesh, and I was not dreaming.

"O stop, it will kill her!" I cried, suddenly forgetting myself in anxiety for her. My warning was too late. She raised her eyes—terror in them at first, then a wild joy.

It did not kill her; joy was her wine of life. We were a happy group listening to Fred's explanation. He had indeed been very ill, and his life had been despaired of. Thinking there was no possibility of his recovery, his landlady, having an opportunity, had packed his trunks and sent them to his mother. The letters he had sent since his recovery had miscarried, from some cause. And that was the simple explanation of the mistake that had caused so much sorrow.

In a letter from a friend in C—— Fred had learned the story of the curl.

"And then I should have come home to claim the prize if it had been possible," he said.

And while Del's face grew scarlet, and her eyes full of wonder, he took from a diary in

his pocket a little, carefully-wrapped package, which being unrolled, revealed a curl of long, golden hair tied with a bit of blue ribbon.

"There, Miss Del, *there* is your curl!" cried Aunt Hester, triumphantly; "and I may as well confess now, that I was the thief. I promised Fred he should have it, and I was determined to keep my promise. I just followed you to the door that morning when you went out, with my embroidery scissors in my hand, and when your head was turned I quietly snipped the curl off."

"O Aunt Hester, why didn't you tell me?" said Del, reproachfully.

"If you couldn't marry Fred because you cared for him I knew he wouldn't want you to just because you had made a silly promise to marry the one that had your curl," replied Aunt Hester. "But that *is* certainly your curl, and I don't suppose anybody can blame you for keeping your word."

And Del did keep her word, as soon as the old glow of health and happiness had come back to her cheeks. Mr. Stuyvesant bore his disappointment more resignedly than I had expected, and said very little about it. But that might have been because a niece of his from I—— came to C—— upon a visit, whose hair, strange to relate, was exactly like Del's, only it was not quite so long.

DICK WIGGIN'S PRIZE.

BY WILLIAM L. WILLIAMS.

"HALLOO, Dick Wiggin!"

"Halloo, Bob Belknap!"

"Come over here, Dick, I want to tell you something." And Dick picked his way across the muddy road to hear what his friend Robert had to say.

"I say, you know our old black ram?" began Bob, mysteriously.

"I guess I do—didn't he knock the breath out of me once when I punched him with a beanpole?" inquired Dick.

"Yes—that's the very one. Well, father says that I may have that old ram to do just what I am a mind to with, and I am going to sell him, for I want the money to spend next Fourth of July," replied Bob.

"Who in the world will buy such a beast as that?" replied Dick.

"Perhaps you will, when I tell you how I am going to sell him. You may have a chance at him for half a dollar," said Bob.

"What do you mean?"

"I am going to raffle him, Dick. I have made thirty tickets, which I shall sell for fifty cents apiece; that will make fifteen dollars, and somebody will get the black ram for half a dollar," explained Robert.

"First-rate idea. I will take a ticket. Here is the money." And Dick produced a dilapidated fifty cent "shin-plaster."

"Good! What number will you have?" said Bob, showing a little memorandum-book.

"Well, let me see. 'There is luck in odd numbers, said Rory O'Moore,' I guess I will take number 15," answered Dick.

"All right! you shall have it." And Bob produced a small package from his pocket, and selected a ticket from it elaborately gotten up with red and blue ink, and reading thus: "*No. 15. Good for one chance in the Black Ram raffle. R. Belknap, Proprietor.*"

Dick put the ticket in his pocket, and felt quite sure of drawing the prize, never once thinking that there would be twenty-nine others having just as good a chance as he. It would be such a splendid thing to draw a prize, and especially that black ram, for then he could plague it as much as he chose, taking care to chain it fast. He also intended so to subdue the animal as to harness him to a cart, and make him useful, astonishing the natives of Chattertown by driving through the principal streets.

Bob Belknap, elated with selling his first ticket so readily, hailed every one of his schoolmates, and urged them to buy. By perseverance he succeeded in selling all the tickets, and had all but three dollars of the fifteen safe in his pocket.

"That's doing pretty well, get rid of the old ram, and have fifteen dollars besides, that is, if I get the other three," said Robert to himself.

Wednesday afternoon was the time appointed for the drawing, and when it arrived, every ticket-holder was on hand to witness it and see fair play. A little fellow named Tommy Blinkford was blindfolded, and requested to draw a number from a hat held up to him. The first number drawn would take the first and only prize.

Dick was in a great hurry to get through his dinner that day, for he wanted to be present when Tommy announced the number. He was a good deal disturbed, however, to hear his father remark:

"I hear that that Belknap boy is going to have a lottery of some kind, and one of the prizes is to be that old ram that is so vicious. No wonder Belknap wants to get rid of the beast. I wouldn't have such a creature on my premises for any money. I am surprised, too, that he should let his boy have a lottery. It is a species of gambling, and I should not allow a boy of mine to have anything to do with it."

Dick's heart came up in his mouth when he heard his father say this. 'What should he do? Instead of doing the best thing in the world, that is, confessing to his father how much he was implicated in Bob's lottery, he very foolishly decided not to say a word, but go ahead as he had begun, and trust to luck; perhaps his father would change his mind if he found that Dick really owned the ram.

The drawing took place, and Dick was there. Tommy Blinkford had a bandanna handkerchief tied over his eyes, and with one hand he drew forth a number from the hat, and held it up.

"Hurrah!" shouted Dick, throwing his cap in the air, "the old ram is mine. Number fifteen has drawn the prize! 'There is luck in odd numbers, said Rory O'Moore.' And he was so pleased that he jumped about

quite merrily, until he began to think of what his father had said.

Dick felt very much like the man that drew an elephant in a lottery; he was the owner of the black ram, but how was he to keep him when his father would not permit it? He tried to get Bob to allow him to keep it in his barn, but Bob would not consent; he said Dick had got the ram cheap enough to find a place to keep him in, he had raffled the ram on purpose to get rid of him, for he did not want him round, nor would his father have him, either.

Dick did not know what to do. He had no barn to put him in, not even a woodshed; it would not do to tie him up in the yard, for his father would see it at once, and be highly exasperated. He must find somewhere to secrete the animal until his father's permission was obtained. There was but one place that he could think of. Dick's chamber was in the L part of the house over the dining-room; adjoining his chamber was a rough, unfinished room over the kitchen, from which a flight of stairs descended to a small entry-way between the kitchen and the back door. If the ram could be put up there for a day or two until Dick had made it all right with his father, it would do very well. But could the ram be made to walk up stairs? Bob's advice was asked, and he assured Dick that the ram could walk up stairs as well as he could, and promised to help get him up.

So Dick ran home to see if the coast was clear, and soon returned, saying that everybody had gone out, and now was a first-rate chance to stow away his prize.

As soon as the boys heard what was going to be done, they were anxious to lend a hand.

A rope was procured, and with some difficulty fastened to the ram's horns, then the boys took hold, and pulled the creature along towards Dick's house. For a short distance the ram went along very well, but as soon as it recovered from the astonishment caused by such treatment, it began to be obstreperous, and plunge about in a very troublesome and careless manner. It made a dive at a lady that was passing with a baby in a perambulator, knocking the lady off the sidewalk, and rolling the infant out of the carriage into a very dirty mud-puddle. But after a while the boys arrived at Mr. Wiggin's.

"Now we shall have a job getting the critter up stairs," said Tom Morrison.

"I guess not, Tom," said Eben Batchelder, "all we've got to do is to pull, and if the rope

does not break, the ram is bound to come up."

So the boys went to the head of the stairs and began to pull with all their might. The ram did not fancy going up stairs, but held back with all his strength, until, finding resistance useless, he made a sudden rush up the staircase, scattering the boys in every direction, and taking refuge in the very room where they wanted to put him.

"Hurrah!" shouted Eben, jumping up, and rubbing the back of his head which was pretty severely bumped. "I told you we should get the old fellow up. My gracious! Didn't he come though! Every one of us went over, the old ram slacked up the rope so suddenly."

"Well, Dick, now you've got him just where you want him, so I would let him stay; he will be docile enough when he gets hungry," said Bob Belknap.

"All right," said Dick, "nobody ever comes to this room; there is nothing but old trumpery in it, and if the old beast does not make a noise, no one will know he is in the house."

So Dick shut the door, and the boys went home well satisfied with their afternoon's fun. Dick went to the cellar to hunt some old wheels and other material for making a cart in which to harness his black ram, as soon as his father could be coaxed into permitting him to keep it, and he felt quite sure that the moment his father saw the noble animal he would immediately relent.

Supper time came at last, and Mr. Wiggin came home, but although Dick watched carefully for a chance to introduce the ram question, he could not get one. His father was not in very good humor; something adverse had happened in his business, and he was explaining it to his wife so earnestly that Dick saw plainly he must wait till another day. After supper it was the same; Mr. Wiggin took some account-books that he had brought from the store, and was soon absorbed in them. Richard went to his book-case and selecting the "Swiss Family Robinson," sat down to read it for at least the fifth time. Mrs. Wiggin took her work-basket, and sat down to darn the weekly quota of damaged hose. The old black ram in the lumber-room, glad at last to be 'let alone,' laid down and went to sleep.

Everything went along quietly till about half-past eight; Dick had forgotten everything in reading about Jack's buffalo, and wondering if he could not put his black ram to the same use; Mr. Wiggin had covered two

or three sheets of paper with scribblings and figures, when a loud ring came at the door-bell.

Joanna went to the door, and in a few minutes ushered in Deacon Peleg Spatterbury, a worthy old farmer who lived on a back road not far distant.

"Why, Mister Wiggin, how do you do? Hope you're well, Mis' Wiggin. That's your boy Dick, is it? I've hearn my gran'son tell on him. Pesky cold weather, Neighbor Wiggin," said the old gentleman as he came in.

"Yes, the weather is beginning to feel like winter, Mr. Spatterbury," said Mrs. Wiggin.

"That's so, Mis' Wiggin. I was tellin' my wife just afore I come out, says I, 'Statira, if we aint keerful our pump will get ketched.' It got ketched twice last winter, and cost me five and thrippunce to get it fixed. Money aint so plenty, Friend Wiggin, as to spend it on froze pumps."

"You are very right, Mr. Spatterbury, it is not pleasant to lay out money in repairing pumps," remarked Mr. Wiggin.

"What I called over for, Neighbor Wiggin, was to see if you could lend me that big buffalo overcoat of your'n. I expect to go to West Crowboro' to-morrow, and it'll be mighty comfortable to wrap up in going over. I'll take good care of it, and fetch it back all right," said the old farmer.

Dick heard this request in dismay. That old coat had been lying for months in that very chamber where the ram was, and no one had wanted it, and now at this very time to have it called for, it seemed as if fate was certainly against him. He sat in fear and trembling for the result.

"O certainly, Mr. Spatterbury, you shall have it with pleasure; I seldom use it, and can spare it as well as not," replied Mr. Wiggin; then speaking to the servant-girl, who had entered the room, he said:

"Joanna, I want you to go into that lumber-room over the kitchen, and get that large buffalo overcoat you will see there; take a lamp with you, and be careful."

"Yes," thought Dick, "I guess she had better be very careful." And he listened anxiously while Joanna was gone. He had not listened long when a terrific shriek rang through the house, and in a moment more the girl rushed into the room, her face as white as chalk, her eyes dilated with fright, and trembling from head to foot.

"O sir, what did you send me to such a room as that for, at all, at all! Sure the devil

himself is there; didn't I see his horns, and his cloven hoof, and his two eyes, blazing at me? Faith! and I'll niver go up those stairs again if I live till I'm in my grave ten years!"

Of course Mr. Wiggin and his guest could not imagine what all this meant, although Dick knew well enough what had frightened Joanna. But evidently something was the matter, and Mr. Wiggin, taking the lamp, requested Farmer Spatterbury to follow him, and they proceeded to the haunted chamber. Now the black ram,

"Like Egypt's Amun roused from sleep,"

had started up at the servant-girl's entrance, and being refreshed by the nap he had taken, felt all ready for a battle or fight of some kind; he shook his head and stamped his foot defiantly, looking around for some object to empty his phials of wrath upon. At this moment Mr. Wiggin and his elderly neighbor appeared at the door, and entered. For a moment the lamp shone, just long enough to let them see the fiery eyes, the crooked horns and dark outline of the horrid beast, then a draft of air extinguished the light, and immediately the elder Wiggin received a terrible blow in his stomach, knocking him with such force against Mr. Spatterbury as to overturn that gentleman, who chanced to be near the staircase, and heels over head, with a frightful clatter, went both of them, together with the old ram, over and over, down to the foot of the stairs. Joanna, who was listening at the kitchen door, seized her shawl, ran out of the house, and did not return for three days.

Mrs. Wiggin and Dick hurried to the spot, and found that Mr. Wiggin and Farmer Spatterbury were somewhat battered, but not seriously hurt; the ram, however, lay on the floor, with his neck broken, quite dead. Mrs. W. had a good fit of laughter at the ridiculous sight before her; Mr. Wiggin regained his feet, and requested an explanation of the mystery. Dick was tempted to tell a lie, but fortunately he had courage enough to tell the story, through all its ramifications, holding back nothing. Mr. Wiggin was so pleased that he forgave Richard, and told him the ram should be his. So the body was sold, and Dick had money enough from the sale to buy a young lamb, which proved far more profitable than the black ram, for in fifteen years that little lamb had increased to an immense flock, yielding a large income per annum.

DISGUISED AUTHORS.

NO precise reason can be given for authors writing under fictitious names. It is probable that many who adopt a *nom de plume* have some object for so doing peculiar to their state of mind at the moment of sending their first book into the world. Not many authors are very sanguine as to the success of their first work; they are apt to believe that even though the publisher has accepted it, public critics or friends may not be quite enthusiastic as to its merits. It is, therefore, often thought better by the author to publish the book anonymously under a feigned name, for it is easy and delightful afterwards to confess to being the author of the book when everybody is talking its praises, should it prove a hit. It is by no means unfrequent for an author to use a fictitious name to prevent his or her whereabouts being discovered, when it is desirable to keep the same unknown. Most people, in spite of that oft-quoted adage of Shakespeare's, have a great depth of belief in a name, and always consider themselves sufficiently ingenious to fabricate a more striking and easily remembered name than that given them by their godfathers and godmothers. In some cases this is correct enough; but as often as not totally unnecessary.

It is worth noting how very usual it is for writers to hide themselves under some pen-name when attempting for the first time a style or subject out of their ordinary line, such as Scott did when he quitted poetry and took to his prose romances. If a poet writes prose, he frequently disguises the authorship; and it is a very common occurrence for a prose writer who bursts out in a volume of verse to sign some feigned name. But in spite of all that may be conjectured on the subject of the reasons why fictitious names are used, there are cases where no suggestion can be made as to motive. Why are some excellent writings merely signed by a single letter of the alphabet? How is it that there are books, essays, poems, all sorts of writings, of very great merit, without any name or initial, the author being as unknown and dead to the public as are those who sleep in quiet but beautiful corners of our churchyards, with nothing but an ever-green mound to mark that some one rests

beneath. Happily the names of authors of many unsigned great books have crept out. "Friends in Council" and "Vestiges of Creation" originally appeared without an author's name, but the writers of both are now well known.

Fictitious names in fiction are by no means confined to the pages of the stories, for authors of this kind of literature seem very fond of giving a made-up name in place of their own. Most people know that Edna Lyall stands for Miss Ada Ellen Bayley; John Strange Winter for Mrs. H. E. V. Stannard; Artemus Ward stands for Charles Browne; George Eliot for Marian Evans; and Cuthbert Bede for the Rev. Ed. Bradley. Does every one know that Rita is the *nom de plume* of Mrs. Otton Von Booth; Ouida of Madame Louise de la Rame; Max Adeler of Charles H. Clark; Josh Billings of H. W. Shaw; Sam Slick of the Hon. T. C. Haliburton; Marie Gaston of Alphonse Daudet; Holme Lee of Miss Harriet Perr; and Sarah Tytler of Miss Henrietta Keddie? Everybody knows that A. L. O. E. stands for "A Lady of England," but some may not be aware that this lady is Miss Charlotte M. Tucker.

Here are a few more of the names which occur most frequently in one's reading: Hans Breitmann stands for Charles Godfrey Leland; Country Parson and A. K. H. B., Rev. Dr. Boyd, St. Andrews; Christopher Crayon, J. Ewing Ritchie; Bab, W. S. Gilbert; Edward Garret, Isabella Fyvie Mayo; Girl of the Period, Mrs. Lynn Linton; Marian Harland, Mrs. Terhune; H. H., the late Helen Hunt Jackson, whose romance "Ramona" has done for the American Indians what Mrs. Stowe has done for the slaves; Professor Hoffman, Angelo J. Lewis; Ascott R. Hope, Robert Hope Moncrieff; Henry Irving, J. H. Brodribb; Johnny Ludlow, the late Mrs. Henry Wood; Helen Mathers, Mrs. Reeve; L. T. Meade, Mrs. Toulmin Smith; Owen Meredith, Lord E. R. Bulwer-Lytton; Joaquin Miller, C. H. Miller; New Writer, Lewis Morris; Cornelius O'Dowd, Charles Lever; O. K., Olga Kireet, now Madame Novikoff; Pen Oliver, Sir Henry Thomson; Oliver Optic, W. T. Adams; Max O'Rell, Paul Blouet; H. A. Page, Alexander H. Japp; Pansy, Mrs. S.

M. Alden; Phiz, Hablot K. Browne; Rob Boy, John Macgregor; S. G. O., the late Rev. Lord Sydney Godolphin Osborne; Hesba Stretton, Sarah Smith; Annie Thomas, Mrs. Cudlip; Toby, M.P., Henry Lucy; Mark Twain, Samuel L. Clemens; Uncle Remus, Joel Chandler Harris; Verax, Henry Dunckley; Elizabeth Wetherell, Susan Warner.

Most of our poets, both great and small, have at some time appeared under the disguise of a *nom de plume*; but the list of those who make a regular practice of doing this is a short one; Lady Wilde, a society poetess, is known to be the authoress of poems signed Speranza. Mary Berwick stands for Adelaide Anne Procter, and Barry Cornwall for Bryan Waller Procter. One would hardly have credited Longfellow with having signed himself Joshua Coffin.

There are many cases on record of women adopting a man's name, for the sake, no doubt, of giving their works extra weight.

George Eliot, Currier, Ellis, and Acton Bell (the Bronte sisters), and Georges Sand are fitting illustrations.

To works of a practical and instructive nature authors usually sign their real names, but there are exceptions. Cavendish (on Whist) is the *nom de plume* of Henry Jones; "The Battle of Dorking" is by Colonel Chesney; and "Religion and her Name," by Archbishop Whately, and not by a John Search. J. Arbuthnot Wilson stands for Mr. Grant Allen; and Stonehenge (on Dogs) for the late J. Walsh. Thomas Carlyle wrote of himself in "Sartor Resartus" as Herr Teufelsdröckh; and Charles H. Ross sketched himself in the character of Ally Sloper. Mrs. Valentine delights our babies as Aunt Louisa; William Combe related the tours of Dr. Syntax; and Joachim Heinrich Kampe has interested everybody with the remarkable adventures of the "Swiss Family Robinson."



THE PAINTED CHAMBER:
—OR—
CLARICE LOGAN'S CONFESSION.

BY MISS CAMILLA WILLIAN.

PART V.

CLARICE LOGAN, as we shall now call her, sat for some time in silence, after Lewis Car- left her—silent, but with a tremor of excitement running through her, and a deep color burning in her thin face. She was not strog, and the memories which she had called up in telling her story that night, had shaken 'er. Besides, to tell it in N—, and so near that house!

"I will go away to-morrow," she said to herself. "Why should I stay? I have done all that is necessary, and the air of the place poisons me!"

She got up presently, and began to move about uneasily, changing the furniture from place to place, looking out the window, poking the fire.

"I would like to see the place again," she said, in a whisper. "It is foolishness, I suppose; but I would like to see it."

After hesitating a few minutes, she went up to her chamber, and soon came down dressed for a walk. It was yet scarcely eight o'clock, and she slipped quietly out a side door, and walked rapidly away in the direction of Linden Square. It was more than a mile distant, and before she reached it, she began to walk more slowly, loitering more and more, sometimes seeming on the point of going back, but drawn forward by a sort of fascination.

She paused, with a shudder, as she saw the shadows of the line of trees on the avenue, and the broad side of Bond House, lighted from basement to attic; but, having once looked, she could not turn her eyes away. She walked slowly along, looking with an eager gaze towards the dark windows of the painted chamber and its adjoining parlor, and stopping on the sidewalk opposite them. She stood in a shadow east by an angle of a house, and drawing close, was unobserved. The darkness of the night also screened her, for there was no moon, and the skies were

shrouded by a mist that obscured the stars.

Ah! the long, bitter years since she first set her eyes on that house! What a madness it had been, from first to last! She stood, and went over it all in her mind—the first out-stealing of love for that man, the first agony of finding herself a dupe, the wild pangs of jealousy. Then the struggle between principle, and a passion that overbore all else, finally ending in an infamous consent to connive at infamy, for the sake of pleasing the man she loved, and ruining the woman she hated.

"I might have persuaded her to renounce him," she muttered, with a dreary remorse.

She remembered their hair-brained escape, so successful, though so ill-arranged.

"The devil helps his own!" she thought.

Then there came up that climax of misery, the end of their journey. Arriving at N—, it had been thought better for her to separate from the others, and she had gone to an obscure lodging-house, while they had taken possession of their elegant apartment. She went back, moaning over the days and nights which she had passed, seething with jealousy at thought of their happiness, then the sharp pang of delight with which she had perceived that their sin was bearing its fruit, and that already with them strife had taken the place of love.

Then—the end!

Shivering at the remembrance, the woman put her hands over her face, to hide some sight from them. When she removed her hands, and looked up again, the windows of the apartment which she had been watching were blazing with light. She started forward eagerly, to look. There were the heavy curtains, falling at each side of the window, the blue ceiling, the painted walls, and a large, carved wardrobe, of which she could see the top. While she stared, with unmoving eyes,

into the room, a sudden shadow passed across the light, and a woman ran suddenly past the window, her hands raised, her long hair streaming over her shoulders.

"My God! How like!" breathed out the watcher, and, unconsciously drawn, slowly crossed the street, toward the lighted windows.

As she did so, the woman in the painted chamber again rushed across the room, and was for an instant in the full blaze of light.

A cry rang out on the night, and the watchman near by, running to see whence it proceeded, found a woman lying insensible on the pavement, by the side of Bond House. A lady and gentleman coming from across the square, towards the house, came to see what was the matter.

"A lady fainted!" said Mrs. Lang, pityingly. "Who can she be? Bring her into the house. Help him, wont you, Frank?"

Another watchman assisting, they bore the insensible woman into the house, and applied restoratives. For some time their efforts were unavailing, but at length she opened her eyes. Only strange faces about her, and she did not recognize the place. The surroundings helped to confuse her, and she could not at once bring herself back to the present.

"Are you better?" asked Mrs. Lang, kindly. "That chamber! The painted chamber!" whispered Clarice Logan, shuddering.

Mrs. Margrave and Mrs. Lang exchanged glances.

"You saw it, then?" asked Mrs. Lang, bending down to whisper the question, a swift thought darting through her mind. How should this woman have been so overcome by anything which she witnessed in the painted chamber, unless she knows something of the mystery connected with it.

Clarice Logan stared at the speaker, with eyes in which fear and eagerness struggled, then glanced at the others. Her look so evidently asked it, that they drew back, and left her with Mrs. Lang.

"What do you mean?" she demanded then, rising to her elbow.

"A woman and a light are sometimes seen in that room," Mrs. Lang replied. "The room is mine, but I never slept there, and very seldom stay there alone. Some ill deed has been committed there, and I mean to find out what it is. Tell me what you know about it."

"I cannot!" whispered the woman, in terror.

Bessie Lang was not cruel, but she was resolute upon occasion, and she was determined

to fathom this mystery. She perceived that the stranger knew the meaning of this apparition which had disturbed her, and also that she was in a state of mind and body to be terrified into making revelations. She determined to make use of her terrors.

"When the dead come back to demand justice, how dare you refuse it?" she whispered, impressively. "I tell you, that woman haunts the room, and will haunt it, till all is known."

Clarice Logan slowly gathered her straying wits. What could this woman know of what she was speaking? It was evidently guess-work, founded on her own lack of self-control.

"I will tell nothing till I must!" she thought, and shut her eyes, in order to collect herself.

Bessie Lang waited patiently, expecting a solution.

"I feel better—well enough to go home!" said the sick woman, starting up. "I am sorry to have troubled you so much. As to the cause of my illness, I was astonished and frightened, and, having been ill before, and still very weak and nervous, I was easily overcome. All I can tell you is this: I saw the room suddenly lighted, and a woman appeared, who looked like a friend of mine, who died there eighteen years ago."

"Mrs. Berkley?" asked Bessie, determined to show that she was not entirely ignorant of the matter.

Clarice Logan looked at her with a startled glance, but made no reply.

"If she was a friend of yours, you ought to know what she wants," Bessie went on, hastily. "A person doesn't come back for nothing. If I had a friend come so, I'd speak to her, and find out what she wanted, if I died for it! I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will stay in that room to-night, I'll stay with you, and we will see what will happen."

The stranger had been making as though she would go away, but at this bold proposal, she stopped, and looked at the speaker in surprise.

"I will do it!" Bessie repeated, stoutly.

Clarice Logan sat down and thought. Here was the opportunity for expiation. Poor Magdalen Lawson! Beautiful, wayward, passionate creature! Who could tell what awful tortures she might be suffering for her sin? Who could tell what agonized search her lost spirit might be making for help?

"I, more than any other, was responsible for her guilt," she thought. "My punishment

is closing around me. I cannot escape it. Poor Magdalen!" She looked intently at Mrs. Lang, who was waiting her decision. "I don't want any talk made about this, madam," she said, with some severity. "If there is to be a combination of all the curious people in the house, I will not stay. It is a matter of something more than curiosity to me."

"No one shall know but ourselves and my husband," Mrs. Lang said.

"Will he consent?"

"O yes!" said Bessie, with the ready confidence of a young and beloved wife.

Clarice Logan thought a moment, then said "Yes!" drawing a long, deep breath, as though she had pronounced sentence on herself.

"Leave me to manage for you," said Bessie, eagerly. "You lie here a little while longer, and I will go out and speak to my husband."

They were in the dining-room, and the others, finding themselves *de trop*, had withdrawn. Mrs. Lang called a servant, and sent to the parlor for her husband to come out into the entry.

"Why, Bessie, what has happened?" he asked, seeing his wife's pale, stirred face.

"Hush, Frank! Come into the corridor a minute. Now, Frank, I have made up my mind to do something, and all you have got to do is to consent. That woman in there knows all, or almost all, about the painted chamber affair. She fainted on seeing the woman, and she says that a friend of hers died there eighteen years ago, and that this woman resembles her. Her friend was the Mrs. Berkley that Mrs. Margrave told us about. There is more than she will tell; but she wishes to know what the meaning of this apparition is, and she and I are going to sit up in the chamber to-night."

Finishing, Bessie Lang looked up into her husband's face with a very determined expression of countenance, under which, however, might be detected a slight uneasiness as to his decision. It came in one word:

"Fudge!"

Mrs. Bessie turned away indignantly.

"Stop, Bessie!" he said. "Don't be vexed; but, now, isn't it really nonsense? You hear strange noises and see strange sights one night, and you faint, and lie like one dead. This woman, coming up the street, sees a light and a woman through the window, and she drops insensible on the pavement. And yet, you two would stay all night in that room, and face whatever may come! Can't you see

how unreasonable it looks? The result will be that you will lose a night's rest, and see nothing, or, if you see anything, you will alarm the house in the middle of the night, and there will be two fainting women to take care of, instead of one."

Bessie had determined to keep cool, though she was greatly provoked.

"What you say is very plausible, supposing that I and this woman were not able to make up our minds to control ourselves. Recollect that when we fainted, we were both surprised. Now we shall be prepared. You don't know me as well as you think you do, Frank Lang, and it's time you were enlightened. When I make up my mind, I can face whatever comes!"

The husband did find himself a little surprised, indeed, by what he saw in her face—the raised look of excited resolution.

"But, Bessie," he began, intending to coax. She interrupted him.

"We want you to sleep on the sofa in the parlor," she said, seeming to consider everything settled. "And we don't want any one in the house to know what we are going to do. Come, now, and assist the woman up stairs. The sooner we get out of sight of folks, the better. Mrs. Margrave may come out at any moment."

Completely overpowered by her decision, the husband followed his wife into the dining-room, and then accompanied the two women up stairs.

Clarice Logan shook like one in an ague, when she went into the little corridor which led to the suite of rooms, but she walked decidedly, and did not hesitate to enter. There was no light but the fire, but Mr. Lang immediately lighted the gas, his wife going courageously into the bedroom, to light up there. Then the three seated themselves around the fire.

By this time, Clarice Logan had begun to feel how strange her position must seem to the two persons with whom she was so unexpectedly brought into such intimate relations. Besides, she had caught the searching eyes of the gentleman fixed on her more than once.

"You may call me Miss Farrel," she said, glancing at them, then looking down at her folded hands. "I was a second cousin to the Mrs. Berkley who died here, and I came to N— with her. I accompanied her and Mr. Berkley from home. No one knows so much about their affairs as I do. I was mainly responsible for her coming here. It was an

unfortunate journey, and cost her her life. I have never been in this house since, and have spent a good deal of time out of the country. Of course I never dreamed of any such thing as seems to have happened. I was intending to leave town to-morrow, and to-night took a fancy to come up and look at the house where she died. I stood over across the avenue, recalling her, and the time we had spent together, when suddenly the rooms were brilliantly lighted, and I saw her! She ran across the room, with her hair streaming over her shoulders. I was so much wrapped in the past, that I never thought it could be merely a resemblance. I should have thought so after my recovery, if I had not perceived that the appearance was a remarkable one, and that I was not the first one to see it."

"Would you like any word sent to your friends to let them know that you are not coming back to-night?" Mr. Lang asked, still suspiciously.

"I have no friends here. I am stopping at a hotel," the woman answered, with a mingled air of dreariness and pride, as though she detected his suspicion. "The only person in the city whom I know, is Mr. Lewis Cary. I have a slight acquaintance with him."

"Lewis Cary!" exclaimed Mrs. Lang, with animation, and an access of cordiality. "Do you know him? He is engaged to a very dear friend of mine, Dora Lawson. We were just from there, and left him, when we found you."

The stranger made no reply, and a silence fell. They perceived that she either was averse to pursuing the subject, or that she was so moved at the prospect of what she might witness in the night, as to be unable to interest herself in anything else. After a while, she spoke again:

"Would you be so good as to tell me what you have seen here, and what others have seen?"

Drawing nearer to her husband, Bessie told all that she had seen, and all that Mrs. Margrave had told her. Between the recital, and answering questions, an hour passed, and it was eleven o'clock.

"Time for us to set our watch," said Bessie, rising, with a resolute smile. "I will bring you a pillow, Frank, and you can lie on the sofa. I shall leave the door ajar."

Dissatisfied as he was, it was too late to resist, and he made no reply, but obediently took his pillow, and prepared to be as resigned as he could to such extraordinary movements.

Mrs. Lang led her pale visitor into the inner

chamber, placed an arm-chair for her before the fire, and left her for a moment, to say to her husband a tenderer good-night than she felt disposed to say before a stranger.

"O Bessie! I do hate—" he began; but she stopped him.

"Now don't make me feel badly about what I am determined to do," she said. "Perhaps we shall see and hear nothing. But if we do, my Father in heaven will not allow me to come to harm. I promise you this is the last time that I shall attempt to do anything in the matter. If we are disturbed to-night, we will give up the rooms immediately."

"Well, good-night, dear!" he sighed. "Speak to me at the slightest sign."

While they were together, Clarice Logan sat alone, trying to feel warm before the fire, but shivering in spite of herself. The air of the room seemed chilly, and the fire looked dull. It seemed, too, that a cold draught blew over her fitfully. She glanced at the windows and doors. All were shut, except the door into the parlor. Mrs. Lang came in through that, bringing a tray with a *tete-a-tete* service on it.

"I thought that we would both feel more wakeful, and in better spirits, if we take a cup of tea," she said.

She made the tea over a spirit-lamp, persuaded her silent companion to take a cupful, then brought a couple of illustrated magazines.

"They will help to pass the time," she said, taking an arm-chair near and facing her visitor. "How dull the light is! I will turn it up higher."

"It is all turned on," said the woman, quietly.

Their eyes met, then both looked at their books. They were very pale, for each felt the gloom and dimness, and the approach of some supernatural terror.

Here let me pause, to say one word to the skeptical reader. Everything of supernatural here mentioned, actually occurred. In nothing has the writer drawn on her imagination, in nothing has she been the victim of imposture in this regard. Every test has been applied which could be thought of, and the most unbelieving have been compelled to confess that there was, in these manifestations, something which could not be explained by natural means. While it is a mark of weakness to be too credulous of prodigies, it is equally a mark of stubborn ignorance to deny that unexplainable wonders have happened, and may happen again.

For half an hour, the two women sat in perfect silence, pretending to read, but alert and watchful for the slightest sound. Then both looked up, with fixed, pale faces, clasping their hands tightly, and setting their mouths closely. For a slow, soft step, accompanied by the rustle of a woman's garments, crossed the parlor, and came towards the door of the chamber where they sat. They fixed their eyes on the door, and waited. The step was on the threshold; it crossed, and came towards them, but they saw nothing. Only a chill breath of air stole over them, and a sigh, long and pitiful, mingled with the rustling of the lady's sweeping robe. The step advanced steadily, and paused between them.

Bessie Lang had not miscalculated her strength. Though chilly with an awful terror, she yet had no thought of wavering. She would find out what this visitation meant, and face whatever might appear to her. But more awful than any sight against which she had steeled herself, was the face of her companion. There is nothing more terrifying than the face of one smitten with terror. No feeling is more readily communicated. And the face of this stranger was full of deadly terror. The eyes looked with a glazed stare at the spot where their invisible visitor had paused; the lips were parted, and seemed not to breathe, and the whole face was overspread with a greenish pallor. She was leaning slightly forward, and the hair seemed to rise from her forehead.

As Bessie Lang looked at her, she slowly shrank back, as though recoiling from some touch, and drew in a shuddering breath so sharply that it sounded like a hiss.

Bessie started up, and went to her, touching her on the arm. She never moved, nor seemed aware of the touch, and her arm seemed perfectly rigid.

"Rouse yourself!" whispered Bessie. "Whatever it is, God is stronger than all evil."

The woman paid no attention, but sat there as if turned to ice. Her hands were perfectly cold and bloodless, and the expression of her face became almost vacant.

"I wouldn't give up so to all the ghosts in the universe!" said Bessie Lang, trembling with indignant excitement. "What is this creature, who dares come here to disturb us? I command her to leave us in peace, or to say once for all what she wants, then never come again. She has had her life. If she misspent it, 'tis her own affair. Each one has to save his own soul. Come out of this terror!"

Speaking thus, she put her hand on the stranger's forehead.

The touch seemed to melt that rigid form, for a trembling passed over it, the eyelids drooped wearily, then raised themselves, and she looked at Bessie Lang with an imploring gaze, and made an effort to speak. But her tongue seemed palsied.

"Did you see anything?" whispered Bessie, gently smoothing the forehead to which her touch seemed to bring back life.

"She touched me!" said the woman, in a stammering voice. "She was going to speak. Her touch froze me!"

"She will not touch you again, I think," said Bessie, scarce knowing why she said it, but feeling that she spoke truth.

Even in speaking, she recoiled; for a chill breath swept her cheek, and a small, icy hand was laid on her forehead, freezing her, as the other had said. The touch was removed instantly, and Bessie, after one instant's pause, turned towards where the person seemed to stand, all her spirit blazing up.

"And you will not touch me again!" she exclaimed.

A soft knocking began on the table at her elbow, as though one knocked with gloves on. It grew louder, and ran around the walls; it made the vases tinkle on the mantel, and shook the window-hangings. And all the while a swift step paced the room, with that sharp rustle, as of silken drapery, and with the chill waft of air whenever it passed near them.

"My God! what shall we do?" whispered Clarice Logan.

"I have thought!" said Bessie Lang. "We will get a message. Are you a medium?"

"I don't know. I never had anything to do with it. I don't know how to."

"Well, there is a way," Bessie said. "I never tried it, but we will now. Stop this knocking, if you please, and we will give you a chance to say what you wish."

She moved a little stand up before the fire, and drew her chair beside it, so that she and her visitor sat on opposite sides of the table. The knocking slowly subsided, and when she was ready to speak, there was entire silence. She placed a pencil and paper before her, and began, first explaining the process to her companion.

"I will call over the letters of the alphabet, and the table will rap when I come to the right letter—that is, if this woman has anything to say. If she has not, she had better

take herself off. Now let's see if the table will rap."

She had scarcely spoken the last sentence, when the table almost leaped under their hands, knocking eagerly and violently. Bessie Lang felt quite satisfied and at home. Everything was falling out as she desired, and she was commanding, as was her delight.

"You take the pencil and paper, and mark down the letters as they are indicated," she said. "I fancy that my hands are the strongest, and I will not move them from the table. A, B, C," began Bessie; and the table made a loud knock at the third letter.

It was written down. The process was repeated, and the next letter was L. And so on, till a name was spelled out—Clarice Logan.

"Clarice Logan!" said Bessie. "Why, I've heard Dora Lawson speak of her. She was a relative of Dora's. What can she want?"

"My name is Clarice Logan," said the stranger, calmly, resolving on the instant to fling falsehood behind her at once and forever.

"But you can't be the same," Bessie said; "for she was drowned—she and Dora's mother—while out on a pleasure-sail."

"I am that Clarice Logan!" the woman repeated. "Let us see what more there is."

Bessie stared a moment, with a new dismay in her face. Was the woman insane? But she was in no mood to be cowed.

"What then became of Dora's mother?" she demanded.

"She came here, and died in this room," replied the other. "It was an elopement. Mrs. Lawson and Mrs. Berkley were one. It is Mrs. Lawson who is giving this message."

Bessie looked steadfastly at her companion, drew a long breath, and went on with her alphabet. There was but one sentence given besides the name:

"You know your duty!"

"I will do it!" said Clarice Logan, solemnly, taking her hands from the table.

They sat in silence for a little while, both feeling that nothing else was to be done, Bessie revolving the woman's startling declaration in her mind.

"It must be true," she thought. "That explains all. But how in the world can it be? Would Mr. Lawson make up that story, to cover the disgrace?"

"Of course you are not to repeat what I have told you," Clarice Logan said, with an air of quiet authority. "Your husband is to know, but no one else. I shall myself tell Mr. Lawson. It cannot be kept any longer."

"But this Mr. Berkley?" asked Bessie Lang, eagerly.

"I can tell you no more," said Clarice Logan, quietly.

Bessie would have felt like resenting this reserve, but for the woeful face with which the words were pronounced.

"Is Mr. Lawson well?" asked the stranger, presently. "Does he seem old, or broken?"

"He is very well," Bessie said; "but he looks far older than he is. His hair is perfectly white, though he is but fifty years old. I think that such news would shake him very much; but he could get over it, if there were no public disgrace. I think that pride is Judge Lawson's strongest feeling."

Meantime, while the two women across the square were dealing with their invisible visitor, Lewis Cary had called in a servant, and, with his assistance, had lifted Judge Lawson to a sofa, and, after a time, had succeeded in restoring him to consciousness. The servant had wished to alarm the house, but had been peremptorily commanded by Mr. Cary to keep the matter to himself.

Judge Lawson's first expression, on opening his eyes, was one of utter bewilderment. The next moment, he glanced hurriedly around, to see who was in the room, and seemed relieved to find only Mr. Cary and a servant.

"Are you better, sir?" asked Lewis Cary, anxiously. "I didn't allow any one else to be called, since it was merely the heat of the room that affected you."

"You were right," Judge Lawson said, sitting up, and assuming an air of calmness. "I am quite well, and I don't want Dora to be alarmed. Thomas, you may go."

They sat in silence for some time after the servant had left them, Lewis Cary feeling anxious and awkward, and waiting for the other to speak.

"You must have thought me very unreasonable," said the judge, at length, speaking in a measured tone, rather like one who feels obliged to offer an apology, than like one who regrets a course of action. "I hope that you will pardon me, in consideration of the painfulness of the communication which you had to make. I cannot yet feel that it is true, but I cannot deny that the case is singular. I must see this woman who calls herself Clarice Logan."

Lewis Cary reddened at first, and then thought:

"Why not? I can fix up the story with her. She will convince him, and I can prevent

her from telling any more, by promising to tell him myself in good time."

"You will tell her to come to me?" said the judge, impatiently, as the other did not answer.

"Certainly! I will see her in the morning," was the reply.

"Dora must know nothing of this," said her father, his voice tremulous. "Even if it should turn out to be utterly false, I would not have her know that scandal had dared to meddle with her mother's name."

"I am particularly anxious that Dora should not know it," Lewis Cary replied, eagerly. "Indeed, in my anxiety, I thought far more of her than of you. True or false, I wish that her heart may never be pained by the tale."

Judge Lawson lifted his face, and held out his hand impulsively to his companion.

"You are a generous fellow, Cary," he said, with emotion. "I am afraid that I have not always been just to you, and that my approval of your suit to my daughter has not been as cordial as you deserved. I will make what amends I can there."

The young man flushed with triumph. After all, how easily he had won over the judge! But would Dora respect her father's wishes in favor of her lover, any more than she had those against him?

"You need rest, sir, and I had better go," he said, rising. "I will attend to that matter in the morning. I suppose you would wish to call on this woman?"

"Yes," said the other, thoughtfully. "Yes, that is the only way. I don't want her here, nor at the office."

"Shall I assist you up stairs, sir?" asked the young man.

"You may, if you will be so kind," said the judge, sadly. "I don't feel well, and Tom will be sure to give an alarm, if I ask his help."

The door of a chamber near the head of the stairs stood open as they went up, and as the judge went slowly by, leaning on his companion's arm, a little cry broke from the darkness inside.

"Why, papa, what is the matter?" cried Dora, running out, and showing that she had not yet commenced to undress.

"Nothing, child, only I had a little faint turn," he said.

"Why didn't you call me, papa?" she exclaimed, clinging to him, with tears in her eyes. "Let me do something for you."

"I am quite well, only a very little weak,"

replied her father, trying to smile, to reassure her. "I didn't call you, because I supposed you to be in bed and asleep, as you ought to have been. Don't be frightened, child. It is all over, only Lewis was so kind as to insist on helping me up. He is as much of a simpleton as you are."

Dora looked at her father in astonishment. When had she ever heard him speak of Lewis Cary by his first name, or in that tone of familiar affection? She glanced at her lover. He was regarding her with a faint and mournful smile, in which was something of reproach. He withdrew his eyes, after that one glance, and said not a word. She felt instantly that there was more than they said in this, and that Lewis Cary was in some way concerned in her father's illness. It was his peculiar manner during the evening, and his saying that he had business with her father, that made her leave her door open, and wait dressed till her father should come up. Her own thought had been that he had determined to ask from her father an explanation of her coldness, and perhaps to give her up. She felt a little shame and regret at the thought. She had not expected such a prompt realization of her wishes.

Lewis Cary felt her lingering glance, and determined to repay her with her own coldness. He could safely leave her, for the present, to her father's influence.

"Since you have so good a nurse, judge, I need not stay," he said, bowing. "I will come in to-morrow morning, to see if you are quite recovered. Good-night!"

He bowed again, and was about going in that formal manner, when Judge Lawson held out his hand, and glanced significantly at his daughter.

"Good-night, Cary!" he said, kindly. "Come in in the morning, without fail."

"I have already said good-night to Miss Lawson, several hours ago," said the young man; and, pretending not to see that she made a motion to extend her hand, he went down stairs, and in a few minutes they heard the street door close after him.

The moment Lewis Cary went away, Judge Lawson turned and went into his chamber, without saying a word to his daughter.

"Papa," she said, following him, "I'm sure there must be something you want."

"I should have been pleased if you had treated your intended husband with civility this evening, if you could not treat him with kindness," said her father, sternly.

"Why, papa?" began Dora, in utter astonishment. Then, after a pause, added, a little sarcastically, "I wasn't aware that you were so fond of Mr. Cary."

"I was prejudiced against him, Dora," said the judge, earnestly. "I think that I wronged him. But, once having given him a promise, I wish to behave like a gentleman, and to have you behave like a lady. The word of a lady or gentleman of honor is as good as their oath, and, having once committed themselves to any course, they go through with it, not only

strictly, but generously. What would be the difference between discarding Mr. Cary basely, with no cause but caprice, and treating him in such a manner that he could not help asking a dismissal? The former is the more honest course, but both are unworthy me and you. Good-night!"

The good-night was said in so imperative a tone, and his air was so unlike that of a sick man, that Dora had no alternative but to echo the word, and retire, too utterly confounded to make any protest.

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

THE PRIVATEERSMAN.

BY GEORGE H. COOMER.

THE trees of Babelmandel, looking to us like the line of a low and verdant inland, show their dark tops in the distance, as the ship, turning on her heel, like a marine at the "right about," moves slowly away from the "Gate of Tears," (the Arabic signification of the name of this celebrated strait.) Long and musingly we looked at the green land, the more romantic of our number pondering its historic associations, and the old "canvas-backs" thinking what "bully grog" they would be likely to get at Aden, if they could only go ashore.

In our anxiety to "strike oil," for our ship was a whaleman, we had cruised from Madagascar to the Straits of Malacca, thence by Ceylon and the Maldives to the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Ormus; had anchored for a few days under the towers of Muscat (which city, it appeared to me, must have looked precisely as it does now in the age of Melchisedek, with the same dingy streets and houses, and the identical dried and preserved Arabs—for I don't believe these people ever die), and thence we had stood off and on along the coast of Arabia, to Babelmandel.

The coast we now looked upon embraced the gateway of that Red Sea, "which parted at the prophet's rod," and gazing towards the romantic shore, I could not help saying aloud: "And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea."

"That old Moses was a ticket," said big Tom, who lay coiled up on the topgallant forecabin.

"That's so!" was the answer, from a little fellow resting half out of the forecabin, "that's so! I allus like to hear about them coves—old Exodus and Ramath Gilead, and sich—they was high old chaps, considerin' they never went to sea."

Here, too, upon the very spot where we now sailed, "our trusty and well beloved servant, Captain Robert Kidd," as the royal commissioner styled him, essayed his first exploits in piracy, attacking the fourteen ships of the Mocha fleet, which sailed, as the old chronicler hath it, "some with English, some with French, and some with Moorish

colors." The afterwards renowned buccaneer fired upon one of the Moorish ships, but was chased off by the men-of-war that convoyed the fleet. In the evening, as we sat upon the windlass, we discussed the subject of Kidd and his exploits, and one of our men roared out the famous old song commencing:

"My name was Robert Kidd,
When I sailed, when I sailed;
My name was Robert Kidd,
When I sailed;
My name was Robert Kidd,
And most wickedly I did,
God's laws I did forbid,
When I sailed."

The conversation presently turned from piracy to privateering—a distinction without much of a difference—when a boat-steerer named Ben—the oldest man on board—spoke of a cruise he once made in a privateer famous throughout the United States. I had read before, and have read since, several pretended accounts of the doings of this craft—not a word of truth in any of them—and was, therefore, much interested in the narrative of the old tar, especially as he was a man of some education, fine powers of intellect, and presented his picture of scenes, "all of which he saw, and part of which he was," without any affectation of those intolerable salt phrases, which, after all, occur oftener in the pages of sea-tales than on shipboard.

"We got underway in the morning," said Ben, "the owner, the very picture of an old time merchant, and the Napoleon of progress in the busy little seaport, running about the wharf in his short breeches and knee-buckles, and giving directions in his sharp, quick manner, as long as we could hear him. We passed Montauk and kept away to the eastward. In sixteen days we made Land's End, off which we spoke a Swedish ship, and learned that a fleet of eight sail was about to start from the Downs for the West Indies and ports on the Spanish Main. Two days after, we saw it coming, looking like the Spanish Armada. It was convoyed by the Romney and Agamemnon, ships of the line, the Cheviot and Newcastle, frigates, the Solway, sloop-of-war, and the Owl and Atlas, brigs. We kept out of their way until nightfall, when we got into their

wake, and followed them under easy sail. For more than four thousand miles, like a little white cloud, we hung to windward of the squadron, not half so welcome to the British mariners as the cloud of Elijah upon Carmel was to him. Sometimes they presented a beautiful spectacle—the heavy old West Indiamen under full sail, and the ships-of-war, a-weather and a-lee and ahead and astern of them, looming up only a few miles from us, till we could see the copper on their bottoms as they rolled in the lazy swell. From first to last, we captured six of their merchantmen, by pouncing upon them unaware, yet not one of our prizes ever reached the United States—except, indeed, the last, which, as the result proved, might, as well have been recaptured with the rest.

“Once, in the mid watch, we found ourselves right up among some scattering ships, but rather to the windward of the main squadron. Here and there was a dark object which we knew must be a vessel. One of them was close to us. We heard eight bells struck on board of her, and the watch called. Now and then we could even hear the officer of the deck speaking to his men. Getting close alongside, we grappled her on the quarter, and twenty or thirty of us jumped aboard, but there was a good deal of noise made, and two or three muskets were fired, as I suppose, to alarm the fleet. We bundled the prisoners into the privateer—stout looking fellows they were, in their blue shirts, with their greasy sheath knives strapped behind them—put a crew on board the ship with old Tom Brown (you know him) for prize master, and ordered him to take the ship out of the squadron as soon as he could. A tall, dusky object, traced dimly against the sky appeared nearing us rapidly as the two vessels parted company, but bringing the prize in range between the stranger and ourselves, we soon lost sight of both.

“The cloudy-looking visitor, as we afterwards learned, soon ranged alongside the prize, revealing the fair proportions and grim battery of the Owl brig, which, from her peculiar ability to see in the dark, was the first of the war vessels to appear upon the scene. I had noticed her with admiration as we hung around the fleet—a large, rakish, handsome brig, four hundred and fifty tons, or thereabout, mounting twenty guns, beautifully sparred, with yards very square. As she came dashing alongside the prize-ship, the following ‘amusing and instructive’ dialogue

occurred between her commander and ‘Captain Tom’:

“‘Ship ahoy?’

“‘Hallo!’

“‘What’s the row among you? and what craft is that we have a glimpse of?’

“‘That’s the bloody Yankee pirate; she’s been trying to board us, but the bloody cove found somebody as could ‘andle cold hiron as well as they. Ve ‘ad a bloody ‘eavy tussle, but the cat-faced son of a marine sheered off ven he seen the bloody old Owl hat ‘is ‘eels.’ Tom’s crew chuckled at the adroit manner in which he had fooled the—

“‘Back your maintopsail, you lying Yankee pirate, or I’ll pitch a ton of iron into you!’ shouted the British captain, and the chuckle of the prize crew went over to the other side of the mouth.

“The British commander knew the ship even in the darkness, from her having lost her main royal-mast at dusk that evening, and he knew also her late captain to be a man who didn’t say ‘ve’ for ‘we.’ Tom had overdone his ‘cockney.’ I saw him soon after he came out of Dartmoor, and we had a good laugh over the matter.

“Although the prize captain’s bungling artifice sprang from necessity, trickery is always mean; and this perhaps is the reason why Tom, an honest-hearted fellow, succeeded no better in it. I wish that novelists, and venders of contemptible anecdotes of low cunning would not so lead one to the inference that because a man is a Yankee he has the right to be a lying knave.

“One morning not long after this affair, the ships-of-war and most of the vessels of the squadron were becalmed, while we had a breeze. We bore down upon them with some caution, taking a good look to see that they were all right; for once, upon just such an occasion, when we became too familiar, the Owl, which was always mousing about to windward of the squadron, plunged an eighteen-pounder shot into our bows, knocking one of our six-pounders the whole length of the vessel. We returned the compliment, and, as I live, at the first fire we put a shot right between the big eyes of the figure-head, spoiling the great, spotted scarecrow that had so long roosted under the brig’s bowsprit. Then we threw half a dozen shot at her foremast, losing all our credit, for we didn’t even hit the vessel. ‘Give a man luck,’ you know—but, as I was saying, now was our time, and we improved it. They saw the little her-

maphrodite brig, which had so long been a plague-spot upon their happiness, running straight down among them, but they were powerless to avoid or chase her away.

"A very large ship was astern of all the others, with barely wind enough to keep her under steerage way, and towards this bulky foe of freedom, our patriotism inflamed by the thought of the probable two hundred thousand dollars worth of British goods in her hold, we directed our efforts. She was called the General Wellesley, and mounted twenty-two guns, while the privateer, having been obliged in a gale on the outward passage to throw overboard ten of her fifteen guns (a circumstance I forgot to mention), had now but a wretched armament. The action began at long range, but we worked nearer and nearer whenever we could, pouring in grape and canister and round shot. The British commander made a noble resistance, while the ships-of-war, with all sail set, vainly endeavored to come to the rescue. Our brig sat so low in the water that most of the enemy's shot went over her; but the fire from the privateer did dreadful execution.

"It would be folly to say that nobody was afraid, for we had fastened to a big fish, a regular hundred and thirty barrel old sperma, but, neck or nothing, we went at the work, and when the flaming old bunting came fluttering to the quarterdeck of the merchantman, I felt a pretty strong sense of relief. It is not pleasant to lose a leg or an arm, even for one's country, or for sundry bales of broadcloth; and talk of such things as we will, every man in battle feels much as Falstaff did at Shrewsbury—'I would it were bed-time, Hal, and all well.'

"A fog had for sometime been rising, and when the fight was over, it had hidden the ships of the line and most of the fleet. A breeze had now reached them all, and while the merchantmen fled like a herd of buffalo cows, the ships-of-war, like the old black bulls, came plunging toward us. But the fog was coming faster than they. A prize crew sixteen in number, was thrown on board the ship—I was one of them—the huge maintop-sail was hauled round with a will, and we were off. The privateer shot to windward, out of harm's way. The excitement of our feelings was prodigious. The fog was coming—the sternmost frigate grew indistinct, looming up like a shapeless castle. The next, the Cheviot, was soon grasped by the rolling mist, and faded into its depths. The Solway and

Atlas were swallowed by its sealike waves, that rolled above their lofty spars, till nothing of them could be seen but the skysail-mast, that for a moment shot above the cloud. But the Owl was still in sight, not more than a mile astern, and gaining on us as if we were tied to a post.

"That's a 'soon' brig, and a 'soon' man commands her," said one of our fellows.

"Rolling the smoke from her long bow-chasers, she sent the shot singing all around us; but the fog was too much for her; sweeping over her stern, covering her quarter, her mainmast, her foremast, and away out to the end of her flying jib-boom. She would soon be hidden. 'Boom, boom, boom,'—and as the last report died away the round-eyed Owl was buried fathoms deep in an obscurity that might be felt. A few moments more, and our own ship was equally enveloped; the fog lay all around us, and we were free. Taking in studding-sails, we hauled on the wind, so that only by good luck on the part of our enemy could they stand any chance of finding us, and when night again set in, we bore away for Charleston.

"On the coast of Carolina we were chased by the Mermaid, sloop-of-war. With all sail set, though the wind was blowing a gale, we headed right in for Charleston harbor. The British cruiser gained fast upon us, and our hearts sank at the thought of Dartmoor, and the prospect of losing all we had toiled for. With a tremendous sheet of foam rolling from the bows, and the lee cat-head under water, the ship went plunging on. At length we were under the guns of the fort.

"'Thank Heaven!' cried the prize master, 'we are all right now;' but even as he spoke, the fore-topmast went over the side, and the foreyard was carried away in the slings. We let go both anchors, but the cables parted, and in a few moments we were on the bar. A tremendous swell was breaking, and the ship went all to pieces. Many of the hands were lost; but getting hold of a drift spar, I came right side up at last—I suppose the old adage of the 'bad penny' is as good as ever—and here I am telling you the story off the coast of Arabia, in the evening watch. But I'm sorry we lost the General Wellesley; she might have set me up for a merchant; she was the richest prize, with the exception of the Royal Bounty (burned at sea), that the Yankees ever captured. Eight bells! well, I'm glad to hear it."

THE PROFITABLE INVESTMENT.

BY MARY A. LOWELL.

Two men met on the sidewalk of a large and flourishing city and exchanged pleasant greetings. The one, a large, portly man, with the indisputable marks of good living upon his rosy face—the roses extending beyond the cheeks and almost intrenching upon his nose—and the other a pale, thoughtful-looking person, in a coat undeniably seedy and a hat from which the nap was fast disappearing.

"How goes the world with you, Ashton?" said the first, eyeing the other's shabby garments, and evidently marking the difference between them and his own costly gear, and the elegant chain and seals that hung glittering in the afternoon's sun.

"It is hard to say, Mr. Carroll," returned Ashton. "None too prosperously, surely; but I have a hope of a change, sometime. If I had not the most contented little wife in the world, as well as the most prudent and industrious, I should have sunk under my ill luck long ago."

"Prudent and industrious," came slowly from Mr. Carroll's lips, as if he did not know the meaning of the words. Perhaps he thought that his own wife might be, at least, a little more contented with her splendid lot. She had no need of prudence or industry; but she sometimes fretted a good deal when he did not buy just the right thing for herself or her two extravagant daughters. Whatever he might have thought, he only said, "O, you should make judicious investments, Ashton. Nothing like looking a little ahead and buying something that will turn out of great use to everybody before it is thought good for anything."

Ashton smiled bitterly.

"Investments! Why, Mr. Carroll, I have never a dollar of money left when I have paid up my yearly debts. I am glad and happy when I can do that; but I have my children to look out for, and sometimes I wish I could have some little 'lucky streak' to help them on in life."

"My dear fellow, you are too anxious, too conscientious. Leave your yearly accounts one year unpaid and invest the money in some profitable business. The next year, you will see that you are gaining upon life, and more will be added."

"And keep back the honest dues belonging to other men, perhaps, poorer than myself? No, Mr. Carroll. That was not the school where I was taught! I inherited honor and honesty from a long line of noble ancestors—noble, I call them, though some of them had not much of this world's goods. I am proud of my ancestry, sir."

Mr. Carroll blushed a little redder than he had been before this plain talk.

"It is the way of the world, Ashton. Everybody is putting his hands into other men's pockets," he said, half confused at the strangeness of this man.

Ashton laughed.

"Well, Mr. Carroll, if I *should* ever think differently, I will take a leaf from your book."

"Take one now. You know, I suppose, that my father left me the inheritance of the toll-bridge between Carlisle and Shreveport? Well, that bridge made his fortune and mine. He bought it for a trifle, as its after value was not anticipated by any one, save himself, and see what a mine of wealth it has been to us all! It brings me in twenty thousand a year."

"Twenty thousand a year!" repeated Ashton, thoughtfully. "Why, I remember that my grandfather was always talking of a toll-bridge. He was very aged, and we thought he was wandering when he told us that it was a great inheritance, and we must look it up."

"Ah, indeed! Well, if it were really the case, it would be a grand thing for you."

"Ah, poor grandfather! he died poor, and I fancy so will his grandson."

"Come home with me, Ashton," said Carroll, half hesitatingly, for he feared some richer acquaintance might be awaiting him in his magnificent palace.

Ashton went reluctantly, for he dreaded the same thing; but Carroll was in a good mood to-day and he rather urged him.

Stepping into an elegant carriage which had been waiting for Mr. Carroll all this time, the two were driven away together. Ashton could not help noticing the coachman's splendid broadcloth and white kids, thinking that their cost would amply supply his family with clothes for a year to come.

Arrived at the house, his wonder increased, and his mind became a confused jumble of costly furniture, silver plate, rich old wine, delicate meats and fine dresses. Mrs. Carroll, Olivia and Cecilia were all arrayed in the height of fashion, and in the richest silks and velvets; while diamonds dazzled his unsophisticated eyes until they fairly ached with splendor.

"I wish I had not come," he said, to himself. "I had rather see my Mary's gingham dress and little May's white apron close up to their throats, than all this finery and bare shoulders. It makes me sick, this silly show. I long to get back."

So, at the earliest moment, he turned his face away from it all, and went home to tell his darling wife what he had seen. He could not raise Mary Ashton's envy by recounting the dishes of which he had eaten, or the splendid clothes and furniture he had beheld. She only smiled when he asked her if she would not like to be Mr. Carroll's wife.

"No, my poor little figure would look very foolish dressed up in velvet. I think my pretty merino is almost too good for me."

Time went on. At the Carrolls all flourished more gayly than ever. Cecilia and Olivia were engaged to the two richest young men in the city. At the Ashtons the panic had made them poorer, and Ashton, his mind long worried and perplexed by the problem of how this year's debts were to be paid without utter starvation to his family, fell sick with a fever born of his anxiety.

The cheery little wife had held up against trouble and poverty, until it seemed that John could not recover. Then her courage gave way. She did not dare tell him how hopeless she was, but she took May and Charlie out of the room and, pressing them to her troubled heart, she indulged in that true woman's refuge in grief—a good, long cry.

For several days, their family had been increased by the presence of Ashton's uncle, a poor old man, who had outlived all nearer relatives, and had wandered at last to his native place, to see his nephew once more, and then to find a home in the almshouse, as he said, for the few remaining days of his life.

Ashton was too sick to notice his coming, but Mary had said:

"No, uncle, *that* you shall never do. This is a poor little place, and what you or we are not accustomed to live in; but as long as we have a bed or a meal, you shall live with us.

John's own uncle shall not go to the almshouse until we all go."

So, old Mr. Ashton stayed and did good service in helping his generous little niece; too generous for her own good, sometimes, but now reaping rich reward, for the uncle, though worn and feeble, was kind and watchful, and kept the children quiet and amused.

Fortunately, Ashton had recovered and was about the house, when the old man was taken ill with the same fever. A few days he wandered mentally, and John, listening to his vagaries, caught the words "the old bridge is mine, but I shan't live, and it will be John's."

"Mary, all my friends seem to have 'bridge on the brain' when they are dying. You remember what my poor old grandfather talked of so long?"

But the old uncle prattled awhile of "bridges" and died without explaining, and John took cold at the funeral and was in a state of relapse, and poor Mary was overworked and sadly under-fed.

It seemed a doubtful case. John needed nourishing things, and the poor wife remembered, almost enviously, the rich wine and delicate food that John had talked of as having tasted at Mr. Carroll's.

And just at this time, Mr. Carroll's house was turned upside down with preparations for a grand party, which was to outshine all others of the season.

Mary heard of it from a poor dressmaker who occupied one of her miserable rooms, and whose rent had alone kept the Ashtons from starving the last week. John, too, lying in his bed, heard her expatiate upon the feasting and show that was to come off the very next evening, and how the garden was to be lighted up with lamps on the trees, and how she had seen Mr. Carroll himself decanting the precious wines—too precious to be entrusted to the servants—five dollars a drop, she had heard him say, but she didn't believe there could be such a thing.

Mary listened, but her mind did not take in the importance of the subject at all. It was of more consequence to her that her John was lying, suffering so, when a drop or two of that precious wine might infuse new life into his shrunken veins. Mrs. Kendall, the dressmaker, had been up to Mr. Carroll's house, with a dress for Miss Olivia, and they had given her a glass of the very wonderful wine, and she had told them she could not think of drinking it, but if they would let her carry it home to a poor sick man, she would be

ever so thankful. And thereupon, Mrs. Kendall brought up a little bottle from the depths of her pocket, and Mary, scarce knowing what she did, gave John a great spoonful, and was frightened almost to death when she saw the red color flash up into his wasted cheeks.

"It does me good, Mary, dear. I feel strong and well now. Don't worry; it won't hurt me, and I shall sleep."

But he did not sleep long. Little May and Charlie had been looking in an old carpet-bag which old Mr. Ashton had brought with him, and had found some great packages of papers, out of which Charlie had wanted his mother to make a kite.

"Dear boy!" said Mary, "I have not a spoonful of flour to make the paste with. Lay the papers aside, dear, and when we are richer, you shall see what a grand kite I will make you."

The boy had laid the papers on the bed, and John's white, thin fingers were feebly unfolding them.

"Hold the candle here, Mary, dear," said John, rousing himself from his torpor. "Look, Mary, what is this? Do you think uncle owned a house? Here is an insurance policy on a house in New York, and here is another and another."

"John, dear, take care of your poor head. Don't read them to-night. I will look them over."

"No—I am strong enough now. Let me read. Here is another house, and deeds upon deeds of others." He opened another, and his poor quivering lips uttered a cry.

"Mary, Mary! Look at that! We are rich. Rich! May! Charlie! Do you hear? We shall have bread—bread and wine!"

"John, dear, don't, don't talk so wild. Let me take the things away."

"No, no, read it yourself, dear." And he sank back, weak and tired, as Mary, with a wild surprise, read the deed conveying all right and title to the toll-bridge between Carlisle and Shreveport, to John Ashton and his heirs forever.

"That was my grandfather!" said John, in his weak voice, and soon he slept from exhaustion, after his great excitement.

The next morning he was calmer, was up and ate some toast which Mrs. Kendall had brought in.

After that, he and Mary looked over the papers. There was no doubt that they were all correct. John remembered Carroll's boast

about the bridge, and his own and his father's sagacity in making it pay so well, and he related his words to Mary. And while they were speaking, Mrs. Kendall came in and told them that the grand *fete* was put off for a day or two, because Alfred Trevelyan, Miss Olivia's lover, could not arrive soon enough.

"Very well!" said Ashton; "then perhaps I may be well enough to go."

The woman smiled, thinking that the flightiness of his fever had not diminished much; but, seeing that his wife did not look alarmed, she considered it a jest merely, and said, "I am glad you are so much better, Mr. Ashton."

The night of Mr. Carroll's *fete* arrived. Alfred Trevelyan and Cecilia's lover, Edwin Aylesford, were both present, and all was gay and brilliant confusion. Mr. Carroll strutted around with a vain, self-glorying smile upon his face, thinking, perhaps, what a fine thing money is, and how many friends it buys. His portly frame seemed to expand with the occasion. To-morrow, he knew, the city papers would give a glowing account of the whole; and, under the excitement of the precious "five dollars a drop" wine, he became "My Lord Fitzpomp" and sustained the character well. Just as the refreshments were over, he was called from the room.

"Who wants me, William?"

"A poor, shabby man, sir. He looks powerful weak and sorrowful. Mayhap he wants help." And the servant looked very pitiful, as well he might. He had known trouble though his pompous master never had.

"He may come again. I cannot be disturbed."

"I told him so, sir—but he says he *must* see you to-night."

"Ah—crazy, I fancy. Come, Trevelyan, you and I will go and see him."

And they passed into a little ante-room. On the threshold, a man stood, leaning wearily against the door. Carroll did not recognize the bent form.

"You might have waited until morning, I think. You might have known, by the looks of things here, that I was not ready for any but invited guests."

"But I could not wait until morning. You *must* hear me, although you would not care to hear what I have to tell you, and least of all, before these grand people."

"It is not very likely that you could have

anything to tell me, that would be at all interesting."

"Is there nothing then that would make Stephen Carroll grow pale at the telling? Are you so secure in your wealth that no unforeseen circumstances can take it from you? Are all your 'investments' safe? Remember that 'they who trust in their wealth and boast themselves in the midst of their riches' may still become poor."

"Come, come, my guests are waiting. I cannot listen to this folly any longer. If you have no business except preaching, you had better go."

The man looked up fearlessly, and continued as if Carroll had not spoken.

"There have been mighty kings, also, over Jerusalem, which have ruled over countries beyond the river; and toll, tribute and custom were paid unto them. Give ye now commandment to cause these men to cease."

Mr. Carroll turned away with a gesture of contempt.

"I see you are weary of me," said the stranger. "You shrink from my words, and well you may. They are of deeper meaning than you think. The commandment given in Holy Writ is this night given to you. Stephen Carroll, I tell you, and to-morrow will verify my words—all the splendor of this feast—all the broad lands and mighty forests, and grand horses and jewels—even the rich clothes of your wife and children, were bought with wealth that is not—never was—yours."

"Ah!" sneered Carroll, "you are satirical, I see. Was the wealth *yours*? Trevelyan, does this man look as if he were a rival to me?"

Trevelyan laughed a little weak, silly laugh. "Perhaps, sir, he will claim your wife and daughters, as well as their clothes and jewels, if you let him go on."

The stranger took no notice of this insolence, but, going up to Carroll, he laid his hand on his arm and said:

"I could not wait for the law to announce this to you. I have suffered so much in consequence of your retaining what did not belong to you, and what did and does belong to me, that I was forced to come and tell you myself. God forgive me, Mr. Carroll, but I must rejoice a little at the dispensation that changes our situations so completely."

Carroll fell down, as if stricken by a thunder-bolt. Something in the man's tone and in his look betokened that it was no lie that moved his pale lips.

A goblet of wine stood on the table, and Trevelyan hastily seized it to give to Mr. Carroll.

"No, not to him, but to me," said the stranger. "Do you not see that I am starving, famishing for my own? He caught the goblet from Trevelyan's hand and drank eagerly, to the very bottom. "Wine! wine!" he gasped. "I shall hunger and thirst no more. God, I thank thee!"

The guests were thunderstruck at the announcement made by Trevelyan, that Mr. Carroll had been taken suddenly ill and had gone to his room. As courtesy demanded, they soon dispersed, leaving the mansion which they little thought would never be entered by them again. John Ashton went up with Carroll to his chamber, and, after a half hour's earnest talk, was sent away in the family carriage, much to the surprise of the pompous coachman.

Ashton had spoken bitterly; but his was not a heart to cherish such feelings, and the man of recent wealth broke down beneath the loss of his idol. His misery touched his rival, and he left him with more kindly feelings than he had sought him with.

The next day, it was whispered abroad. Some disbelieved, some doubted—all wondered; but there were men of business that knew the long-ago rumored insecurity of the title deed held by the Carrolls, father and son; and there were others who cared little whether Ashton or Carroll owned the wealth; for, now that John Ashton, whose sufferings from poverty had been well known, was about to take his place in society, his personal value had instantly risen.

"And so this miserable beggar takes poor Carroll's wealth quite coolly, does he?" said a friend, to Trevelyan.

"Yes, curse him! He has spoiled my prospects for life."

"Yours? how, pray?"

"Why, of course, I shall not marry Carroll's daughter now."

"O, I thought you were engaged."

"Yes, but I was engaged to a rich man's daughter, and now poor little Livy is as poor as a church mouse, although the fellow has been really quite generous to Carroll, and given up a portion of the back rents, etc."

"And Olivia, how does she take the family misfortune?"

"O, she wrote me a note, saying that she would not bind me to my engagement now. Very handsome in her, wasn't it?"

"And you took her at her word?"

"Why, certainly. Glad to get off so cheaply. I was afraid I should have to propose it myself."

The young man looked at Trevelyan as one might have looked at some newly-discovered animal.

"You are a precious puppy, Trevelyan. You never was worthy of Miss Carroll's hand. I am very glad she has discarded you."

"Discarded me?"

"Yes. I know of some one who will better appreciate her."

"Yourself, then, perhaps?"

"Well, yes. I'm not ashamed to own it."

John Ashton and Mary, May and Charlie, took possession of their home and fortune with happy hearts. John had been generous to Mr. Carroll, and cheerfully assisted him to make some careful "investments." Towards Olivia, he and Mary were particularly disposed to be kind, especially after Trevelyan's desertion. She married well—not the friend of Trevelyan who had called John Ashton a miserable beggar, but one who had long seen that she was not so encrusted with the pride of wealth as to obscure her other good qualities.

Good Mrs. Kendall found a pleasant home in the *Ashton family*, and no son or daughter of poverty ever turned away, unrelieved, from that hospitable mansion.

THE ROTHSAYS.

BY MISS AMANDA M. HALE.

THE Rothsays were the great people of Arlingford. The simple fishermen who lived on that rugged coast, and who were dependent upon the great house for many small kindnesses, which warmed their hearts even more than they softened their rough lives, regarded the family with a respect singularly alien to the rude irreverence of the American character, which scarcely tolerates a superior, and curiously scrutinizes every man's credentials before allowing his worth. This old-fashioned sentiment doubtless grew out of their isolation, which exposed their traditional reputation to no merciless uprooting by the vandalism of the age, and partly, I hope, from the real merit of the family, their genuine claims to esteem.

The Rothsays had been strong in numbers; princely sons and beautiful daughters maintained the renown of the name. But at last a blight seemed to fall upon the race; children's voices ceased to echo in the great halls; oftener and oftener the doors of the family tomb were thrown wide apart, and a coffin, so small that a single man could lift it, went down into the gloomy crypt, and was hid there with the light and hope of strong hearts, until it got to be a saying among the cottagers, that the Rothsays were born but to die. And so many and many a wise head was shaken over young Allan's prospects, especially as the boy had an adventurous, daring temper that was not always held in check by prudence.

For once, however, in spite of old wives' prophecies, fate relented. Allan grew up, lithe, and active, and brave, and proud; but before he had reached his majority again the doors of the gray old tomb were swung aside, and father and mother followed along the

dark way. And so Allan Rothsay found himself without kindred on this side the water. Sometimes, when in a genial mood, he would tell stories of gay cousins who lived in the old country, and betray in such ways the instinctive longing for companions who shared his own blood. By-and-by, the longing took shape. There was an exodus of servants from the old house, and Mrs. Martin the housekeeper confidentially told her cronies that the young master was going abroad.

"And it's my opinion," she added, with a sagacious nod, "that the lad'll bring back a wife with him. There's none in these parts good enough for him, and it's natural he should look among his own kin for his bride."

"Are there any young ladies among them, do you know?" said her neighbor, sipping her tea.

"Young ladies? Plenty of them, I'll warrant, and young ladies worth a man's wooing, too; not like your delicate things here, whose blood all goes out of their cheeks at a bit of a scamper, but rosy, splendid creatures, full of warm life to their fingers' ends. There was Margaret Rothsay—she will be our Allan's second cousin, and about his own age now. Eh! what a beauty she was as a child. Hair black as night, eyes that shone like diamonds, and a skin as white as milk, except where in her cheeks and lips it beat the roses for redness. I should not wonder if he brought Margaret Rothsay back with him."

The haphazard guess came true. One day, about a year from that time, a carriage came driving up to the house, and Mrs. Martin, coming in great haste and in her trepidation tying on her black silk apron wrong side before, was met by a vision of

loveliness that made her pause and cry out, "Arran!" in her astonishment.

A lady in the conventional travelling-dress of silver gray, plain and plainly made, but worn as a queen wears her robes of state—a lady with black, jet-black hair and eyebrows, eyes dark and luminous, a soft, white skin that flushed and paled at every emotion, and smiling lips that did not know how to speak their happiness, met her at the door.

"Don't you remember me, Mrs. Martin?" said this creature. "Don't you remember little Meg Rothsay, who used to tease you for currant-buns, and bread and butter with marmalade? You were a dear soul, easily coaxed, Mrs. Martin!"

"The Lord love us!" said that lady, aghast. "Sure you're never Margaret Rothsay?"

"Margaret Rothsay it is," said Allan, who stood by with a radiant face. "Margaret Rothsay still, though she has been through a ceremony which changes some people's names. So, Mrs. Martin, let's have the fatted calf killed and make merry; for the prodigal son has brought home his bride."

"Bless you, Master Allan!" said the good housekeeper, wiping her eyes. "If I'd known you were coming, I'd have given you a reception worth having. O lad, if your mother could have lived to see this day!" And with this Mrs. Martin hurried away, leaving these two young people, who must henceforth be all the world to each other, alone, looking into each other's eyes, each divining the other's thought, but too full-hearted to speak.

True love is forever beautiful, but never more touching, more impressive in its sacredness, more heavenly in its suggestions, than when, springing up in pure, unsophisticated hearts, it supersedes all ties of kindred and home, all the interests that have clung around childhood, and grown strong with years, and is to each a kingdom and a home.

These two, thus thrown upon each other, were infinitely happy. Allan had refined, artistic tastes, that gave him employment at home, and Margaret needed no more than to foster her husband's genius and sanctify his hearth. And so, in this intimate communion, three years slipped away.

There were two children now, Margaret and Lily, twins by birth, but already indicating an unlikeness that was destined to grow with them, and sever them widely. Margaret inherited her mother's splendid beauty; Lily was pale and puny, not a Rothsay at all.

"If I were at all superstitious, I should think some wicked sprite had stolen my child and substituted an ugly elf," said the young mother, almost pettishly.

Allan winced a little. He had a singularly tender heart, and all his sympathies went out towards the wee, pale baby that never cried. but followed him around with mute, dark eyes, and lay, silent and neglected, while her beautiful sister crowed and laughed on her mother's bosom.

"Dear Margaret, don't speak so, don't feel so. Lily is our baby, poor little thing! and, for my part, I love her just as well as if she were beautiful."

"But I don't. I don't love her half, or a tenth part, as well as I do my beautiful darling," cried Margaret Rothsay, kissing the child in her arms.

"That is wicked, Margaret," said her husband, gravely. "Heaven help us if you do not outgrow that feeling!"

Mrs. Rothsay was put out, for almost the first time vexed with Allan. Hitherto he had given her all the attention that he bestowed upon her as a lover. But now, and still more as time went on, and the mother's heart did not warm towards her weakling child, he turned to the poor little Lily, petted her, sang to her, and in many ways comforted the neglected life. Margaret Rothsay looked on all this with jealous eyes. It was unbearable that even her own child should divide Allan Rothsay's love with herself. It hardened her heart still more towards Lily, and sometimes she thought with terror that she almost hated her.

It was in this way that the coldness grew up between Margaret and her husband. It grew and grew, until it became a great dark cloud that shadowed all the household, and shut out the sunshine of peace and love. Allan became reserved and almost morose, and Margaret developed a pride that one would never have suspected was latent in her nature. She was cold and scornful towards her peers, and insolent and contemptuous to her inferiors. The poor rarely came to the house now, or, if they did, they went empty-handed and sorrowful away. A little rill of charity flowed out through Mrs. Martin, who, poor woman, was perplexed and made miserable by the turn affairs had taken—and this was all.

One day, when they had been ten years married, Allan looked into his wife's boudoir, saying:

"I am going out in the boat. Wont you go, Margaret?"

The tone was the familiar one of long ago. Margaret's heart leaped. But her cruel pride would not give way.

"No, I thank you," she said, without lifting her eyes from her work.

He lingered a little.

"I wish you would," he said, presently, with some hesitation.

"You can take Lily with you," said his wife, coldly.

Allan waited a moment longer. She pretended not to see the pain in his face, and went on composedly with her work. Presently he turned away and went out.

She saw him a moment afterwards going down the path towards the rocks, with Lily beside him. It occurred to her then that she had never noticed before that Allan was getting so bent. He had the look of an old man, though barely thirty-seven. The remembrance of his expression, when she refused to go so coldly, smote her with remorse. Little Margaret came to her side. She was a bright, willful, imperious, beautiful child.

"Why do you cry, mamma? Don't cry! Don't, I say! You are not my pretty mamma when you cry," said the young queen, with authority.

"I am sorry I did not go with your papa," said the mother.

"Papa! But why? He has Lily; and you always say he cares for nobody but Lily," said the child, with some scorn. "Mamma, why doesn't papa care for us as he does for Lily?"

Such talk as this was not unfrequent between Margaret and her favorite child; but on this occasion every word was a reproach. Perhaps it was a premonition of coming disaster, that softened her heart so strangely. There are presages about us that we cannot explain; foreshadowings that haunt us against our will.

All that afternoon Margaret Rothsay was singularly restless. She went about from room to room, failing to long occupy herself with anything.

"Isn't there a storm in the sky, Mrs. Martin?"

Mrs. Martin had come into the chamber where her mistress was to put away some linen. She looked at her, surprised for an instant, and then went to the window and looked out.

"A storm, sure enough, Mrs. Rothsay. I wonder I didn't notice those wild clouds scudding across the sky. Sure there's a storm coming, and it'll be upon us before night. It looks much as it did the night the Cleopatra was wrecked right here before our eyes. O Mrs. Rothsay, 'twas an awful sight! The sea black as ink, and the wind roaring so you couldn't hear a person speak close at your ear; every minute or two a flash of lightning that showed us the ship with the waves tearing right over her, and a score of drowning wretches clinging to her masts. O, 'twas woful! But worse, next day, when the tide brought in the dead men, pale and ghastly, and left them at your feet. I never—"

"Pray stop, Mrs. Martin! You know I never liked your stories of shipwreck," said Mrs. Rothsay, impatiently. "If there's really a storm coming, see that everything is made fast for the night."

Mrs. Martin went down stairs, and Margaret Rothsay tried to read. In vain, quite in vain; for the wind seemed to sing a requiem around the house, and Allan's pale, sad, reproachful face gazed up at her from the cruel waves.

In about half an hour Mrs. Martin came to the door.

"Is Mr. Allan out?" she said, in a startled tone.

Mrs. Rothsay trembled, but she commanded her voice enough to say, coldly:

"What if he is? Does any one want him?"

"O Mrs. Rothsay," cried Mrs. Martin, in sudden distress, "they say Mr. Rothsay went out with the boat, and, as sure as we live, he'll be drowned—he and Miss Lily!"

For a moment Mrs. Rothsay felt herself turning to stone; but she rallied presently.

"Nonsense, Mrs. Martin! You exaggerate. If Mr. Rothsay found the weather threatening, he would go ashore by the nearest landing-place and come home along the sands. There is no occasion for alarm. Go away now, and don't vex me with your idle alarms."

Mrs. Martin went away muttering something about hard hearts, that her mistress half caught. The lady stood up, steadying herself by the chair, and a bitter, ghostly smile parted her wan lips.

"They think I am indifferent to him—my Allan! Why, I never loved him in the hey-day of our bridal as I do now, and his coldness is killing me!"

The words ended in a dry, harsh sob.

"If it were not for that—child—there might be peace between us again. O Allan, Allan," she cried, "what would I give for my old place in your heart?"

Down stairs the servants huddled together, and watched the clouds, and said harsh things of their mistress, while up stairs that miserable woman walked the rooms, wringing her hands and talking to herself with the incoherence of despair.

The weather grew every moment more hopeless. Two of the men-servants walked down to the shore presently, to see if there were any signs of the master. In a half hour or so, a little boy from the fishing-hamlet came running to the house, with some news that he had picked up. Mrs. Martin loitered up stairs to Mrs. Rothsay's chamber. That lady was standing in the middle of the room, waiting, with white, terror-stricken face, for the message.

"O ma'am, Miss Lily is safe and will soon be here! She says her papa left her in the hut and himself crossed over to the island, and she fell asleep there, and so did not come home. And O! Mr. Allan may be safe, but I much fear—"

The housekeeper stopped short in her speech. Mrs. Rothsay's lips quivered strangely a half minute before she could speak.

"When Lily comes, put her to bed, and, if there is any news of my husband, let me know."

Mrs. Martin went down stairs to find Lily already in the dining-room, the centre of the servants, and answering a host of questions, now and then stopping to cry for papa.

"He left me in the hut, and said he would go over to the island," she sobbed. "Poor papa!"

The servants shook their heads at each other.

"It'll be hard for the poor child if her papa never comes back," whispered one.

"Maybe 'twill turn her mother's heart towards her," returned the cook. "I've heard as how sorrow changes folks wonderfully sometimes. Perhaps it's all for the best. I hope mistress may be led to see it so."

Mrs. Rothsay herself was comforted by no such pious reflections. Her whole soul was in rebellion. Remorse cut deep into her heart. She accused God in her madness; then she tried to pray, and could not. No one but herself ever knew how she passed that night.

The next morning, some who had watched all night saw a fragment of a boat glide in on a wave. They hastened to draw it out of the water and examine it more closely. Then they looked at each other in significant silence. It was Allan Rothsay's boat, and he was undoubtedly lost in the gale.

And so the waves closed over Allan Rothsay, and in a little while his name ceased to be upon the lips of men. For awhile some curiosity lived to know how his widow bore the bereavement. She was understood to be ill for some weeks afterwards, and the few who saw her could guess what the blow had been. Her beautiful black hair was threaded with silver, her eyes had lost their splendor, her cheeks were pale and thin.

One day when Mr. Rothsay had been dead a month, Lily stole into the room where her mother lay. The child had not seen her since the accident. Some instinct had bade her keep out of her way. But now, she thought:

"Mamma is asleep, and I might have one good look at her and she will never know it."

So the child tiptoed softly into the room, and stood a minute looking at the wan face on the pillow. Mrs. Rothsay stirred, half woke, and dimly saw the little figure in the dark room.

"Is that you, Margaret, love?" she said, languidly.

"No, mamma," said the little piteous voice. "It's only me."

All weakness fled transiently from Mrs. Rothsay's frame. She sat up erect. Her eyes flashed. A demoniac impulse lent her strength.

"You? I hate you! Go away! I never want to see you again!" she cried, in frenzied tones.

Lily ran crying out of the room. Mrs. Martin, who had listened at the door, received her in her arms, and soothed her as well as she could; but the stab went deep. People are careless of children's feelings, even when they do not mean to wound. A child feels even an unintentional harshness, especially a child like Lily, whose natural sensitiveness had grown morbid. Lily never in her life forgot the agony of that moment.

She had always known she was not her mother's favorite—now she believed that she hated her. From that day she avoided the sight of her mother and became preternaturally grave and silent.

Perhaps it was the piteous, pale face that at

last smote Mrs. Rothsay with compassion, perhaps it was her own heart which at last showed her the sin of which she had been guilty. Whatever it was the mother at last repented. She found herself yearning for her neglected child, longing to bridge the grief between them, but not knowing how, or, in her shame and contrition, not daring to make the attempt.

And so in this miserable state of affairs the swift years glided away, and the twins grew to womanhood.

At seventeen Margaret Rothsay was unanimously pronounced a wonderfully pretty girl. Nobody could resist that perfect face and the arch, merry ways that were by no means the least of her charms. But there were a few people who said there was something quite uncommon about that Lily Rothsay—that girl with the pallid Greek face, and the dark, wistful, tender eyes. And then a few persons, by chance or by stealth, had heard her sing and were enchanted.

"It's a shame, Mrs. Rothsay," said a lively lady, one day, "to keep the owner of such a divine voice mewed up in a place like this. Why, the girl could make her fortune on the stage."

"Lily's fortune is quite enough for her needs," said Mrs. Rothsay, coldly.

"O, of course," persisted Mrs. Stanmore. "Everybody knows that either of the Rothsays co-heiresses would be a great catch. But, really, it is almost selfish in you to deprive society of a star like Lily."

"Lily has never shown much fondness for society," said her mother, uneasily glancing to the spot where she stood among her flowers. Just at this moment, the tall, straight figure moved away where Mrs. Rothsay knew no hint of the conversation could reach her. She did not know that no word had escaped her and that the girl's heart was beating quick and strong. Was other life than this possible, she said to herself, with wild eagerness.

The next day Mrs. Stanmore was quite startled out of her propriety, by a series of singular questions propounded with that directness which comes from an absorbing interest.

"Mrs. Stanmore, do you admire my voice?" said Lily, suddenly.

"Why! Yes, my dear, every one must. I was telling your mother yesterday—"

"I know," interrupted Lily. "But I should need a great deal of instruction before I could be a great singer, and then how should I

make my way? I have nobody to help me. Whom should I study with, Mrs. Stanmore?"

Mrs. Stanmore dropped her tating in her extreme surprise.

"My dear Lily, how terribly in earnest you are. I was half in fun, you know; though, really, I am sure you could win a high place among vocalists. But I didn't mean it seriously—" looking curiously at the intent face where the color flickered back and forth in the thin cheeks, and made it almost beautiful. "Your mother would never consent to it," said Mrs. Stanmore, presently.

Lily's face grew hard.

"I should not ask her," she answered, coldly. "My life is my own to do what I will with."

Mrs. Stanmore averred afterwards that she was quite frightened. She had never given that quiet girl credit for so much character. "Do you suppose, my dear, that there is any truth in those queer stories about Mrs. Rothsay's partiality for Margaret?"

As for Lily, a new hope was born in her bosom. It did not perhaps become a steady purpose, but it was an occasional inspiration. When life seemed more than usually hard she used to turn away to dreams of renown and a life absorbed in art, and friends who loved her more for her own sake than for her arts. And so, fitfully, yet to much purpose, she studied eagerly, sought opportunities for hearing good music, and was surely if slowly improving.

A year or two more went, and one day the postman brought letters, some prim, business looking epistles for Mrs. Rothsay, and a handful of elegantly-addressed envelopes for Margaret, in all the delicacy and perfume of young ladyhood, letters from her boarding-school friends. Lily had none, because she had not a friend in the world.

Presently Margaret exclaimed:

"O mother, here is a note from Cousin Douglass Rothsay. Can you believe it? He is coming to see us in company with Uncle Allan Rothsay."

Mrs. Rothsay grew pale while Lily flushed up redly and begged to see the letter.

Margaret laughed archly as she gave it to her.

"He is four or five years older than we are, this cousin Douglass, and of course a fine man, or he wouldn't be a Rothsay. He must fall in love with one of us, mamma, and I guess it will be me."

"You silly girl! Do you fancy every young

man must fall in love with you?" said her mother, smiling faintly.

"I must say they show a remarkable inclination to do so," said Margaret, with an odd look. "But then it may be Lily. She is thinking of setting her cap at him. How interested she looks."

"Don't, Margaret," said Lily, with swimming eyes. "It isn't that. It is—papa's name," she faltered.

"Your father and his cousin were named alike," said Mrs. Rothsay, rather unsteadily; "they were great friends until Cousin Allan went to India. They bore a singular resemblance to each other too. It will be like receiving my husband back from the dead."

For an instant Lily's eyes met her mother's, and the natural sympathy, which even years of estrangement could not destroy, shone out. But the next moment Lily's gaze drooped, her face grew indifferent and cold, and she rose and left the room.

Mrs. Rothsay gazed after her with a sigh. How often now she felt the need of a warmer heart, a stronger mind, to lean upon than her petted, beautiful Margaret, ease-loving, and gay, and somewhat selfish as she was, owned. But she had put her child away willfully. She did not know how to draw her back.

The next steamer was looked for with longing by Lily and Margaret, and with much dread by Mrs. Rothsay. One day it was announced in the papers, and Margaret declared that their friends would lose no time in coming to them.

Nor did they. Almost before they expected it, the gentlemen came, and Lily hearing the stir, and running down stairs, found the party in the drawing-room, her young, handsome cousin, whom she would have known anywhere by his likeness to old family miniatures, and the other older man, yet still young, bronzed by eastern travel, and bearded like a Turk, but so resembling that picture of her father which had never for one instant faded from her memory, that her heart stood still, and she stopped, trembling too much to go forward.

"You have another daughter, Cousin Margaret," he was saying, at her entrance, and turning at the instant saw Lily. He put out both hands impulsively, and Lily forgetting everything ran forward, and was clasped in the warmest embrace she had known since she was a child—Lily, whom nobody ever kissed or pretended to love very dearly.

"You are like your father, child," said her

cousin, when he released her. "I hope you will let me take his place," he said, with deep emotion.

"Nobody can take my father's place," said Lily, warmly; "but I will love you very dearly for his sake."

"Lily's devotion to father's memory is quite romantic," said Margaret. "She was his favorite, while I was mother's."

"Hush, Margaret! There should be no favorites in families. I trust—" she hesitated an instant and went on firmly—"I trust that I love my children alike," said Mrs. Rothsay.

Lily turned cold, wondering eyes upon her mother, and her color rose. A bitter thought came to her. Her mother was as insincere as she was cold-hearted. Mrs. Rothsay, meeting the look, divined Lily's thought and was cut to the heart. Allan Rothsay caught the pitiful look in her face.

"I am sure, Cousin Margaret," he said, huskily. "you have reason to be proud of both your daughters."

She smiled a slow, sad smile.

"I am proud of them, if any heart so chastened as mine has been can know such a feeling as pride;" and then she turned to Douglass, and with a gentle courtesy made the young man at home among them.

Margaret, always at her ease, was already chatting merrily with him, and her vivacity was in striking contrast to Lily's somewhat cold, absent manner.

"Do you remember your father, my dear?" said Captain Rothsay, in a low tone.

At the word Lily's cheeks glowed, and her eyes filled with sudden light.

"O yes," she said, in a soft, tender tone. "You remind me of him so strongly! You have his smile, his very look."

"O, you think so!"

Captain Rothsay had already turned from her and was watching Margaret. But in an instant, to Lily's surprise he spoke again.

"I have always been told that I resembled my cousin, but my own remembrance of him is indistinct. Your father's death was a great loss to you and—to your mother," he added, with some hesitation.

Lily looked at her mother and murmured:

"Yes. Mamma must have loved him."

"The circumstances, too, made it harder to bear, of course—I mean the uncertainty—for I suppose there was some uncertainty as to whether he was really drowned or no," said Captain Rothsay.

Lily looked at him in surprise.

"O no, indeed! There was no doubt of it from the first," she said, sadly.

"No? Then you never entertained the hope that he might have—"

Lily interrupted him with an eager exclamation:

"Papa would never have left me. He would have known how miserable I should be!" she said, and then remembering how much of the family trouble she was involuntarily revealing, she got up hastily, excused herself and went away.

The gentlemen were speedily domesticated in the family. The advent of the masculine element in a household hitherto consisting only of women, makes a curious change in the home atmosphere. Margaret was delighted with the new order of things—to Lily it was a change; and no change could be otherwise than agreeable, and Mrs. Rothsay herself was not ill pleased.

Douglass was generous, affectionate and manly. If he should love either of the girls she would not be sorry. The young people were together all day, and Douglass was always gallant and devoted, but even a mother's sharp eyes could not detect any preference in his manner. If he talked and laughed most with Margaret, his manner towards Lily had a winning deference which more than compensated. If he liked to dance with Margaret, he was not less fond of Lily's singing. But very soon Mrs. Rothsay found cause for inquietude. It would be so natural for either Lily or Margaret to become interested in this attractive young cousin, and if any rivalry arose between them, she could hardly bear it. One day she confided her troubles to Captain Rothsay.

"If either of my girls should get a hurt through my imprudence—particularly Lily—" she faltered.

"Why Lily?" and Captain Rothsay's eyes questioned her keenly.

"Because," she said, a painful flush creeping to her cheeks, "because Lily has already reason for complaint against me. It is a miserable story, Captain Rothsay—I can hardly tell it to you—but Lily might think—she would think—that I had intrigued for Margaret, and—"

She could not go on, and had to listen to Captain Rothsay's kind advice. She could not turn her kinsman out of doors, he told her, and the mischief, if any there was, was already done. She must hope for the best.

Mrs. Rothsay was comforted. The presence

of this man, who showed such a tender, respectful interest in her and hers, who looked at her with the face of her dead Allan, had a strangely soothing effect upon her.

Mrs. Rothsay was in the prime of life. Her matronly beauty was without a flaw. Gossiping acquaintances were already busy with speculations, and by-and-by they came to Lily's ears. She was deeply hurt and angry.

"Mamma marry again! It would be treachery to my father's memory," she said, with vehemence.

"Nonsense, Lily! Do lay aside your high-flown notions," Margaret answered, lightly. "I am sure I think it would be a very good thing. Mamma is quite young enough to marry again. When we go away—as of course we shall—she will be very lonely, and this marriage would prevent all that."

Lily's face did not brighten.

"I don't see why you should object unless you are fond of him yourself," said Margaret, rather satirically.

Lily reddened.

"I am fond of him but not in that way," she said, quietly. She knew she had grown to love him dearly, or rather that he had taken a place in her heart which had been waiting for him, and she thought he had liked her. It had been comfort to her morbid hunger for love to think that he cared more for her than for any one else. And now her mother had come between them. Lily's heart was full of hard thoughts, when Margaret said, suddenly, and with a little uneasy laugh:

"Which of us do you think Cousin Douglass likes best?"

The roses fluttered away from Lily's cheek as she said, hastily:

"What a strange question—how should I know, and what does it matter?"

"It matters a great deal," said Margaret, with decision. "Don't be a hypocrite, Lily. You know he would be a splendid match for either of us. And now I am going to tell you something. If he chooses you I shan't make any fuss about it. I'm going to be meekness and sweetness personified. And if he should fancy me I hope you won't do anything tragic, Lily, but take it as coolly as I should."

Lily's head was lifted and her face had its haughtiest expression as she said, coldly:

"You need not fear that I shall disturb your happiness. I assure you I am quite indifferent as to how my Cousin Douglass disposes of his heart, or, what is more to the purpose, his reputation and his fortune."

Margaret gave a little incredulous laugh, and said, presently:

"I don't pretend to be indifferent to a reputation and a fortune, especially when such a charming person goes along with it. Anyhow, don't let us quarrel, Lily," she said.

Margaret liked to have things go smoothly. She did not want Lily to be absurd or do anything tragic as she said, if Douglass chose her, as she believed he would. But she wanted Lily to be comfortable and make a good match, and she resolved that when she was married to Douglass, "Lily should go abroad and have a chance to make conquests, if only Lily wouldn't go and be absurd."

Lily was quite unconscious of Margaret's intentions towards her, but she was conscious of a singular inward illumination. The flame of her life burned more vividly every day. Her face, her form, her voice, acquired a new, delicious grace. Her complexion, sometimes pale and sallow, grew wonderfully white and transparent, and the evanescent rose that visited her cheeks, and the luminous splendor of her eyes, were something too rare and fine for mortals.

Mrs. Rothsay watched her with hidden anxiety, Captain Rothsay with an inexpressible tenderness that yearned over but did not quite understand her. Young Douglass was not quite deep or quick enough in his intuitions to divine her but he saw and felt the change.

"Lily sings more gloriously every day and grows more beautiful," he said, one day, after she had been at the piano delighting him with one delicious song after another. And then he, too, sauntered out into the garden, whither she had fled, and coming upon her in one of the shaded walks put out his hand to detain her.

"Why do you flee from me, Lily?" he said; and as he stood there looking into the gracious face as fair and pure as the laburnum blossoms over her head, I am not sure that he did not falter for an instant in that allegiance that he had sworn only a few hours before.

There was a minute of full silence while Lily's pulses throbbed strangely. Suddenly a crimson flush swept up to the young man's face.

"I hope you don't hate me, Lily," he said, with a sudden effort; "because I am to be your brother, you know."

If any sweet hope died in Lily's heart at that moment she gave no sign. She was quite capable of dying, herself, without a word.

There was only a little sharp strain in her voice, which Douglass was too much flurried to notice, as she said:

"Hate you, Cousin Douglass? O no! I thought you knew that I liked you very much. So you're to be my brother! I am very glad, I'm sure. Tell me all about it."

And so they walked back to the house, and Douglass was not more than half-pleased by the quiet interest in her manner, only, as he left her, he wondered what made her hand so cold—cold as ice, although the bland warmth of May was abroad. So he told her, and she answered laughingly that she was a child of the tropics, and he must not be surprised if some day she fled to her natural home. And so laughing she went away from him.

A few hours later, and the news was promulgated to the household, and Lily listened with smiling composure, and bore her mother's scrutiny so well that Mrs. Rothsay was quite at a loss to understand "that inscrutable girl," and even Captain Rothsay caught himself wondering if Lily was like other women in her mental constitution. He used to listen, while those sublime chorals came floating up to him, and fancy that she was only made for the company of the angels, whose singing could hardly be diviner than hers.

And so the summer waxed and waned, and soft-footed autumn came on apace. Lily was daily abroad in the glowing woods, and came home at nightfall with a flush as hectic as theirs upon her thin cheeks.

Within the house all was now busy preparation, for Margaret's wedding-day came on apace, and Lily was, as she thought, forgotten. And so she matured her plans which for a long time had been floating undefined in her mind, and went one day to Mrs. Stanmore's for a week's visit—"a most inconsiderate thing in Lily," said Margaret, "when she knew I wanted her help about the *trousseau*."

But the *trousseau* was doomed to remain forever unfinished if it waited for Lily's hands, for, when, at last, Thomas was sent to bring her home, he came back with the appalling news that Lily left that lady's after one day's stay, and Mrs. Stanmore was utterly ignorant as to her whereabouts. Upon the confusion and distress occasioned by this announcement came a short, cold note from Lily herself, written just on the eve of sailing for Europe, with her duty to her mother and sister, and her love to Captain Rothsay—"no one need be uneasy about her, for she was sure of success in her chosen profession. Already

distinguished amateurs had prophesied wonderful fame for her—" and so on, through pages that showed how her art had taken possession of her to the exclusion of all human affections. There was something in this letter that struck them all with remorse.

Mrs. Rothsay shut herself up alone, and it was only after long and urgent entreaties that Captain Rothsay found his way to her. Then he could have wept at the sorrow in her face.

"Don't grieve so, Margaret!" he said, tenderly.

"You don't know what cause I have," she said, almost wildly, "you don't know what an unnatural mother I have been, what a wicked wife. The dislike I conceived for Lily separated me from my husband, wrecked the peace of the gentlest heart I ever knew, and at last drove him from me to death. Why, Allan Rothsay, there has not been a day for ten years that I have not seen his face, as I saw it, pale with pain, when he stood by the door there and made his last appeal to my love. And then, when that wretched news came of his death, I wreaked my grief upon Lily. I hated her as the cause of all. And now she has gone, and I shall never get her forgiveness or cease to suffer from remorse."

She spoke with a strong despair that was more awful to see than any tempestuous grief would have been. Captain Rothsay stood before her, his face pale and set.

"Don't despair, Margaret. Allan has, I know, forgiven you."

"Forgiven me! Why, do you know how bitter it was to him?" she said, suddenly looking up. "He loved me so, you know. Afterwards he must have hated me. I was his wife, and his wife had turned against him—his own wife," she said, sobbing.

"No, no! He never hated you! If he was here now he would say that his heart had never known anything but love and pity for you—the fondest love that has yearned to you all these years, and has at last drawn him back to you, to know if haply there were any of the old affection left to which he could appeal. Margaret, Margaret, my wife, you have not known me!"

She gave him a long, eager look and then with a low cry, fell upon her knees at his feet. But he lifted her in his arms, saying, tremulously:

"Not to me, not to me! God is good, and knows our weakness. And you, too, have something to forgive!"

Afterwards, when her great humiliation was lost in the blessed surprise, the joy of being loved and forgiven, he told her of all his wanderings abroad and the desire, at last grown too strong to be resisted, which had prompted him to return to her in disguise.

"When I went out that day, I took Lily a little way with me, and then the impulse came to go away, to forget our trouble, if I could, in absence. And so I brought the child back and left her on the beach, and put out again. Then the storm came and my boat was wrecked, and I barely saved myself by swimming. And then I wondered if you would not be happier without me, and so gradually the resolve grew up to steal away and let you believe I was dead, as I knew you must. And so after much wandering I joined my Cousin Allan in India, and, dead to all the world but him, I lived until a year ago, when he was seized with fever and died, begging me to forget the past and return to you. But I dared not trust the love I thought I had lost, and so I came unknown. And now, Margaret, we will go in search of Lily, and all misunderstandings shall be cleared up, and we will be very patient with her, blaming ourselves as we do."

"No one is to blame but me," said Mrs. Rothsay, humbly.

A *debutante* was to appear in Milan. Now all the world knows that the opera-goers of Milan are the most severe and exacting of critics, and that if an artist succeeds in passing their ordeal, she is forever safe from the detractions of censure. None know this better than the fastidious Milanese, and it was not to be supposed that they should disturb themselves over the *debut* of a young girl who might or might not be a flower in the garden of song. So there they sat, calm and immovable in the satisfaction of conscious superiority, a solid sea of faces which filled the house from floor to dome.

Of course there were a great many foreigners present, a majority of them volatile Americans who chatted in a light way, extremely trying to the decorous Milanese.

But in one box was a group, silent and motionless with expectation, with perhaps other emotions not easily defined. A good many glasses were attracted by this group; the pale, matronly lady showed reminiscences of remarkable beauty, the gentlemen were distinguished-looking, and a lovelier blond than the young girl the cold north never set

forth to tantalize the warm-blooded south withal.

As the moments passed, and the premonitory strains of the orchestra were heard, the audience grew still, and a breathless hush settled all over the house. Mrs. Rothsay leaned close to her husband, and a deadly pallor crept up to her face.

"What is it, Margaret?" said he, tenderly.

"I cannot bear it, I cannot," she whispered.

"If we could only have seen her first!"

They had been three days in the city and had been quite unable to get access to her. Captain Rothsay's story was listened to with polite incredulity. He saw that he was regarded as a gentlemanly lunatic. Mademoiselle Lilia saw no one until after her *début*, was all the answer he could win. Lily never knew who knocked and waited at her door in vain.

At last the instruments broke into a majestic symphony, and the curtain glided up. A young girl stood there alone, a girl with a white face framed by bandeaux of dark hair, with deep, passionate eyes that shone like stars.

The opera was Verdi's *Macbeth*, a work alien to the taste of the Italians and therefore peculiarly trying to the young *débutante*. But through all the sleep-walking scene the stillness of the house was profound; and when in a passionate aria the most plaintive, perfect voice they had ever heard stole on the listeners, the critical Milanese were enchanted.

When the curtain went down, a storm of applause that rolled up in successive bursts like the waves of the ocean, shook the theatre, and just as it died out, that slight figure and inspired face was before them again and everybody's breath was stilled.

This time it was a tender love song, a wailing, sorrowful, minor strain, that seemed to embody all possibilities of woe, that brought tears to all eyes, and made all hearts throb with exquisite sympathy.

When the applause was renewed, she turned her white face to the audience and bowed—then the dark, beautiful head seemed to droop for an instant, the slender shape to waver before their eyes, and almost instantly a crimson stain broke from her lips and flowed over her white garments, and she sank fainting to the floor, while wild cries of terror and pity resounded through the house.

Mrs. Rothsay was taken out in a swoon. But as soon as consciousness returned, she said:

"I must see her. My child is dying and I must see her."

And now the physician himself gave orders that the people who showed such an extraordinary interest in mademoiselle should be admitted, mademoiselle was indeed dying he told them. She had sung her swan-song.

And so at twilight, not long after, they all stood around the bed where Lily lay among her pillows almost happy at last. She held her father's hand. She would not lose sight of him after she knew he was her father.

"Don't cry, mamma!" she was saying. "I have not a thought of hardness towards you. I would love you if I could—indeed, I do begin to love you—you have been so kind to me."

Some one else stirred just then. Lily's eyes followed him. A light that changed her like a flush of color came over her face.

"Douglass pities me," she whispered. "Papa, I thought I loved him once but I don't know. It seems very unreal now. Nothing seems real to me except the world where I am going—and you—O, I would not leave you out."

It was at daybreak she went. The bell of the great cathedral close by tolled her requiem—and so the lonely life was ended. But the Milanese have not forgotten the pure star that shone for an instant and then faded in the transcendent light of heaven.

